

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT MANAGING A SUCCESSFUL RLF

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I. Introduction

RIEDC brownfields grants:

- Two assessment grants
- “Old” RLF, awarded 2000, \$1.7 million
- “New” RLF grant, awarded 2003, \$3 million. Four Coalition Partners (CPs), mix of petroleum and hazardous substances remediation funding – very complex to administer.

I. Introduction, continued

Structure:

- Site manager is the RI Department of Environmental Management
- Fund manager is the Small Business Loan Fund Corporation

To date, we have made or are in the process of making two loans from our old RLF and one loan and four subgrants on three projects from our new RLF.

II. Communicating Effectively with Coalition Partners

- Once we were awarded the grant, everyone was thrilled and ready to spend the money right away. Be clear: Being awarded an RLF grant does not mean that checks are ready to be cut!



II. Communicating with Coalition Partners, continued

- In setting up the grant and negotiating MOAs with CPs, make clear that the grant recipient (in our case, RIEDC) is the actual grantee.
- Primary role of CPs is to market the program in their municipalities and bring projects to RIEDC for funding.
- I update the CPs on a regular basis as to their available funds.

III. Communicating Effectively with Borrowers and Subgrantees

- Once we were awarded the grant, everyone was thrilled and ready to spend the money right away. Be clear: Being awarded an RLF grant does not mean that checks are ready to be cut! (Does that sound familiar? And of course, sometimes a CP is also a borrower or subgrantee.)

III. Communicating with Borrowers and Subgrantees, continued

It is critical to ensure that borrowers /subgrantees understand the program's requirements.

- I have put a packet of materials together about:
 - Brownfields funding
 - How the RLF program works
 - Cleanup tasks
 - Environmental insurance
 - and including EPA's site eligibility questionnaire, the first step in applying for RLF funding.



III. Communicating with Borrowers and Subgrantees, continued

- Lesson painfully learned: From now on, we will begin process by having potential borrower/subgrantee meet with the CP, RIEDC, RIDEM, and EPA to discuss the requirements.
- Another option: Require regular progress reports.



IV. Marketing the Program

- Before application process for EPA grants started, RIEDC contacted all of the state's 39 cities.
- A challenge: In some small cities and towns, the planner or manager may not understand what a brownfield is.
 - Our plan: statewide inventory combined with training session for cities and towns.

IV. Marketing, continued

- Lead assessment projects into RLF program.
- Our brownfields program is part of our Office of Community Development; we work on brownfields in conjunction with other economic/community development issues.



V. Financial Management

- Can be complicated, especially if, as in our case, you have multiple CPs, a mix of petroleum and hazardous substances funding and, under the new RLF, subgrants as well as loans.
- At the very beginning, do a spreadsheet showing the full grant broken down into all the different categories.
- Work closely with financial people. Mine give me a copy of every check that is cut under the program.

VI. Conclusion

- A fair amount of work is involved in setting up RLF (depends on how big, complicated the structure is)
- Numerous lessons learned
- Ours is now running pretty smoothly
- Fun to be working with EPA, cities, other developers; fulfilling to see sites cleaned up and neighborhoods revitalized.



