



RLF funds are available to local governments to support cleanup projects on eligible sites within their jurisdictions. The RDA and NIRPC already work with area lenders, attorneys, realtors, developers, businesses, and other local and regional community organizations on regional redevelopment projects. These organizations are in the ideal position to market RLF loans because developers and municipalities seek them out to initiate real estate, development, and financial discussions.

The Coalition will utilize local and state environmental/health agencies to ensure that the project is successful. The Lake County, Gary, and East Chicago Health Departments have been actively involved in education/notification, testing and monitoring, and exposure evaluations in the Coalition Cities. Hammond's Health Department closed two years ago due to budget concerns. The Lake County Health Department now serves Hammond. The departments work to educate impoverished citizens on available health resources, provide blood-lead testing for children, and provide basic health screening. The Gary Health Department has received multiple EPA Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) grants and is working on a Community Action Plan to address environmental health concerns in Gary. The East Chicago Health Department is working with four universities to study the effects of dredging and contaminated sediment storage on PCB blood levels of 50 East Chicago students and their mothers. The expertise and experience these departments will be called upon to help identify/verify off-site health threats posed by identified brownfields contamination; perform risk evaluations; conduct notification/education programs; and coordinate health testing if migration of contamination from a brownfields site is confirmed.

The partnership established with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) through the RDA's and NIRPC's existing brownfields and Great Lakes Restoration Initiative projects will be continued to ensure appropriate RLF cleanup and development of brownfields.

Gary was awarded EPA Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training grants in 2002 and 2009, and has used these funds to establish a Brownfields and Green Jobs Training Program. Participants in this program have been trained in lead and asbestos abatement, green building and energy auditing, native plant landscaping management, and various Occupational Health and Safety (OSHA) programs. The Coalition will use these newly-trained program graduates to assist in brownfields cleanup and redevelopment.

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