

Technical Assistance for Brownfields EPA Region 1

Brownfields: Exploring Disproportionate Environmental Impacts on Communities

*Katie Malgioglio, LMSW: UConn TAB Community Liaison &
Community Engagement Coordinator*

University of Connecticut

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Agenda

1. Introduction
 - I. Brownfields Redevelopment
 - II. Environmental Justice (EJ)
2. Brownfields and EJ Timeline
3. EJ Data: Communities with Brownfields Sites
4. EJ Principles in Brownfields Reuse
5. Region 1 Success Stories



An Introduction

- Environmental Justice / Disproportionate Environmental Impacts

- How does this relate to brownfields?

Source: EPA



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE / Examining Disproportionate Environmental Impacts



Just treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of income, race, color, national origin, Tribal affiliation, or disability... in decision-making processes that affect human health and the environment

ALL people are fully protected from environmental health hazards (including climate change and the legacy of structural racism)

ALL people have “equitable access to a healthy, sustainable, and resilient environment in which to live, play, work, learn, grow, worship, and engage in cultural and subsistence practices”

Brownfields and Disproportionate Environmental Impacts

Underserved groups have historically been left out of decision-making processes regarding their environment and health

- Communities of color are disproportionately impacted by environmental hazards (**including proximity to brownfields**)

Brownfields redevelopment can be an opportunity to **advance environmental justice, build strong community networks, empower residents, and create positive, sustainable change**

- OR it can exacerbate social issues and contribute to harmful consequences

Community Engagement is key to equitable, sustainable, inclusive brownfields redevelopment projects



A Historical Overview

Examining brownfields and disproportionate environmental impacts throughout the past 50 years

Source: EPA



Protest Against Landfill in Warren County, NC

1982

1987

"Toxic Waste and Race" is published

Cuyahoga County Planning Commission in Ohio receives first EPA Brownfields Pilot grant

1993

Executive Order 12898

1994

EPA expands brownfields program with 22 new grants

1995



National Environmental Justice Advisory Council & first EJ Caucus

CERCLA's "Brownfields Law" now explicitly includes environmental justice

EPA awards Brownfields grant to Groundwork USA to specifically focus on EJ

1998

2007

1995-1997

2002

2015

EPA awards first Brownfields Job Training Pilot grants

EPA awards first round of Brownfields Training, Research, and Technical Assistance grants



Where Are We Now?

Advocating for a healthy environment and healthy communities

Affordable housing

Anti-displacement strategies

Meaningfully engaging communities

Building capacity and sharing resources with underserved communities



Looking at the Data...

- Demographic Analysis
- Community Characteristics

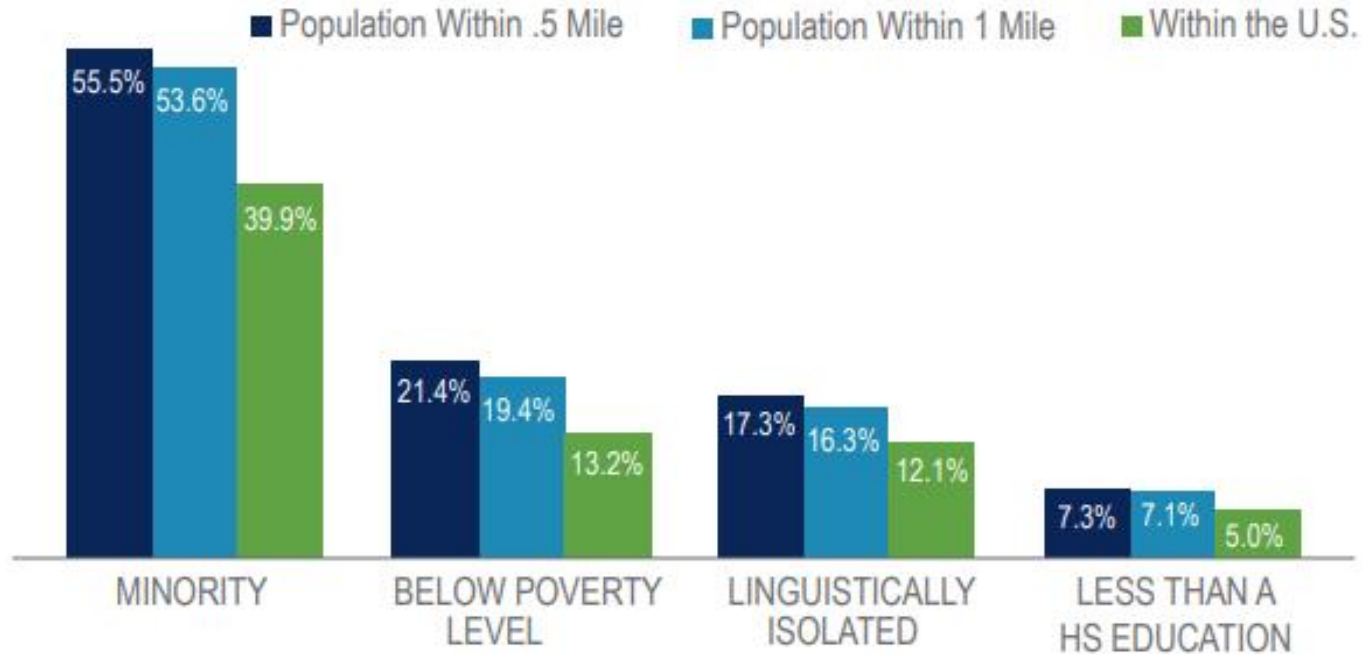
Source: EPA



Brownfield sites from Assessment, Cleanup and
Redevelopment Exchange System (ACRES) as of FY20
Population Data from 2016-2019 American Community Survey

The population living within .5- and 1-mile of a Brownfield site is:

- ▶ more minority,
- ▶ more low income,
- ▶ more linguistically isolated, and
- ▶ less likely to have a high school education than the U.S. population as a whole.



Demographic Analysis of Communities with EPA-funded Brownfield Properties





	Census Block Groups with EPA-funded Brownfield Properties (2019)*	Census Block Groups Nationwide (2019)*
 Poverty Rate Percentage	21.7%	14.9%
 Minority Population Percentage	41.0%	38.2%
 Vacant Residential Unit Percentage	15.2%	11.7%
 Per Capita Income	\$26,642	\$38,712

Table 1: EPA grants are awarded to communities with higher poverty rates, minority populations, and vacancies and lower incomes than the national average.

*Data is based on Brownfield sites reported on in EPA's ACRES database as of FY21 and population data from the 2019 American Community Survey



What Can We Take Away From This Data?

Brownfields disproportionately impact underserved communities

Addressing geographic patterns (brownfields concentrating in certain areas)

Focus on advancing EJ through revitalization



Principles for Equitable Brownfields Redevelopment & Success Stories

Celebrating wins and navigating a path forward...

Source: EPA



Redevelopment: Prioritizing Community Health & Wellbeing

- ✓ Ensuring access to affordable housing
- ✓ Promoting community resilience against climate change
- ✓ Ensuring equitable access to amenities such as health clinics and grocery stores
- ✓ Working with small businesses
- ✓ Creating first source hiring ordinances
- ✓ Ensuring jobs with living wages
- ✓ Partnering with community-based organizations
- ✓ Reusing brownfield sites for greenspace and other healthy, safe and walkable areas (such as urban gardens and parks)



Brownfields Success Story: Howard Street Apartments in New London, CT

- Transformed 5-acre, contaminated site into a 197-unit housing complex
 - Provides safe, affordable housing in an underserved area
 - Well-being of community members was top priority through the visioning and planning process
 - Improved quality-of-life by increasing access to healthy living conditions



Brownfields Success Story: Thornton Heights Common in South Portland, ME

- Transformed former church and school into mixed-use, affordable housing complex with 42 units
 - Neighborhood meetings and community engagement
 - Honoring the expressed needs and vision of local community members
 - Community partners: South Portland Housing and Development Corporation



Brownfields Success Story: Ferrrous Site in Lawrence, MA

- Former foundry and industrial site revitalized into public park, future mixed-use development (affordable housing and commercial space)
 - Community partners: Groundwork Lawrence and Lawrence CommunityWorks
 - Access to green space
 - Common goal amongst stakeholders, partners, community members: improved economy, environment, and quality of life





MUNICIPAL
ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM
(MAP)

SUMMER MAP

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS OPEN

APPLICATIONS DUE APRIL 25, 2024

tab.program.uconn.edu/map-requests-for-proposals/

<https://tab.program.uconn.edu/municipal-assistance-program/>

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Contact Information

Our Team



Randi Mendes, Ph.D.

UConn TAB Program Director
Environmental Engineer
University of Connecticut
randi.mendes@uconn.edu



Wayne Bugden, LEP

Project Manager
University of Connecticut
wayne.bugden@uconn.edu



Katie Malgioglio, MSW

Community Liaison & [Community Engagement](#) Coordinator
School of Social Work
University of Connecticut
katherine.malgioglio@uconn.edu



Demian A. Sorrentino, AICP, CSS

Project Manager
University of Connecticut
demian.sorrentino@uconn.edu

uconn-tab@uconn.edu
<http://tab.program.uconn.edu>