

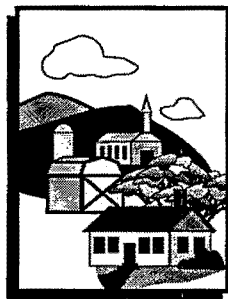


# Superfund Technical Assistance Grants

Office of Emergency and Remedial Response  
Hazardous Site Control Division (5203G)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet  
Publication 9230.1-05/FSA

## WHAT IS THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM?



**Background of the Program:** In 1980, the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)—otherwise known as “Superfund”—established a trust fund for the cleanup of hazardous waste sites in the United States. CERCLA was modified and extended when Congress passed the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA). The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for administering the Superfund Program.

An important aspect of the Superfund program is citizen involvement at the local level in decision-making that relates to site-specific cleanup actions. For this reason, community outreach activities are underway at each of the approximately 1,200 sites that are presently on the National Priorities List (NPL). The NPL is EPA’s published list of the most serious hazardous waste sites nationwide that have been identified as potential threats to the environment.

Recognizing the importance of community involvement and the need for citizens living near NPL sites to be well-informed, Congress included provisions in SARA to establish a Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) Program, intended to promote public involvement in decisions on site-specific cleanup strategies under Superfund.

Decisions concerning cleanup activities at NPL sites should be based on a range of technical considerations. These might include:

- Studies of site conditions.
- The nature of the wastes involved.
- The technologies available for performing the necessary cleanup actions.

The TAG Program provides funds for qualified citizens’ groups affected by a Superfund site to hire independent technical advisors to help them understand and comment on site-related information, and thus participate in cleanup decisions.

*Since the first TAG was awarded in 1988, more than \$6 million has been awarded directly to grassroots groups.*

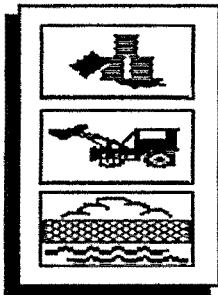
### Basic Provisions of the TAG Program:

- Grants of up to \$50,000 are available to community groups for the purpose of hiring a technical advisor to interpret site-related technical information. Additional funding may be available for unusually large or complex sites.



- The group is required to contribute matching funds, whether in cash or donated services or supplies, equal to 20 percent of the total project costs.
- The group must state what it intends to do with TAG funds.
- Only one TAG is available for each NPL site.

**USES OF  
TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE  
GRANTS**



Citizen groups may use grant funds to hire technical advisors to help them understand existing information about the site or information developed during the Superfund cleanup process.

You can use TAG funds to pay a technical advisor to:

- Review site-related documents, whether produced by EPA or others.
- Meet with the TAG group to explain technical information.
- Provide assistance in communicating the group's site-related concerns.
- Interpret technical information for the community.
- Participate in site visits, when possible, to gain a better understanding of cleanup activities.
- Travel to meetings and hearings related to the situation at the site.

You also can use TAG funds to hire someone to administer the grant (see "Managing Your Grant," page 4).

You **cannot** use TAG funds to develop new information (for example, to conduct additional sampling) or to support legal actions in any way, including the preparation of testimony or the hiring of expert witnesses.

**WHO MAY  
APPLY FOR A  
GRANT?**



Eligible groups are made up of people whose health, economic well-being, or enjoyment of the environment are potentially threatened.

Any group applying for a TAG must be nonprofit and incorporated (formed a legal corporation) or working toward incorporation under applicable state laws. Applications are encouraged from:

- Groups that have a genuine interest in learning more about the technical aspects of a nearby Superfund site.
- Groups committed to sharing site information with the entire affected community.

For example, such groups could be:

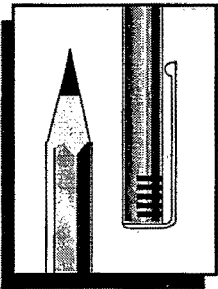
- Community groups formed to address site-related issues.
- Existing citizens' associations.

- Environmental or health advocacy groups that have been active at the site.
- Coalitions of such groups formed to deal with community concerns about the Superfund site and its impact on the surrounding area.

Groups that are **not** eligible for grant funds are:

- Potentially responsible parties—individuals, municipalities, or companies (such as facility owners or operators, or transporters or generators of hazardous waste) potentially responsible for, or contributing to, the contamination problems at a Superfund site.
- Academic institutions.
- Political subdivisions.
- Groups, such as counties or cities, established or supported by government.

## HOW TO APPLY FOR A GRANT



**Requirements and Evaluation Criteria:** When applying for a TAG, your group must provide information to EPA (or to your state, if it is administering the TAG Program) to determine if your group meets specific administrative and management requirements. As part of the standard application, your group also must include a description of its history, goals, and plans for the technical assistance funds.

In general, your group must demonstrate that it is aware of the time commitment, resources, and dedication needed to successfully manage a TAG. Factors particularly important in evaluating an application include:

- Your ability to manage the grant in compliance with EPA rules.
- The degree to which the members' health, economic well-being, and enjoyment of the environment are potentially threatened by a hazardous waste site.
- Your plans for the TAG funds and the technical advisor's services.
- Your commitment and ability to share the information provided by the technical advisor with others in the community.
- The degree to which your group represents individuals in the community.

**The Application Process:** EPA may award only one TAG per Superfund site. To make sure that all eligible groups have an equal opportunity to compete for a single TAG, EPA has an application process that includes the following steps:

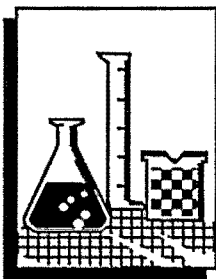
- Send EPA a letter stating your desire to apply and naming the site(s) involved. If work at the site is underway or scheduled to begin, EPA will send you the *Superfund TAG Handbook: Applying for a Grant* and the *Superfund TAG Handbook: The Application Forms with Instructions* and inform others in the community that a group is interested in applying for a TAG.
- Other interested groups then have 30 days to contact the original applicant to form a coalition and submit one application.



- If groups are unable to form a coalition, EPA will accept separate applications from all groups for an additional 30-day period.
- EPA then may award a grant to the group that best meets the evaluation criteria.

At unusually large or complex sites, more than \$50,000 in funding may be necessary to enable citizens to participate effectively in decisions related to site activities. In such cases, TAG recipients may request additional funding.

**CHOOSING A TECHNICAL ADVISOR**



When choosing a technical advisor after the TAG is awarded, you should consider the kind of technical advice your group needs most and whether a prospective advisor has the variety of skills necessary to provide all of the advice needed. A technical advisor must have:

- Knowledge of hazardous or toxic waste issues and experience working on hazardous or toxic waste problems.
- Academic training in relevant scientific and technical fields.
- The ability to translate technical information into terms understandable to lay persons.
- Experience in making technical presentations and working with community groups.
- Good communication skills.

You may use your TAG funds to hire more than one technical advisor if your group wants a combination of skills at a particular site. For example, a group may be unable to find a single advisor experienced in both hydrology and epidemiology, two of the skills most needed at its site. Another approach would be to hire a consulting firm that has experience in all the needed areas. The *Superfund TAG Handbook: Procurement—Using TAG Funds* details the process of hiring a technical advisor and identifies related issues that citizens' groups may wish to consider.

**MANAGING YOUR GRANT**



You must routinely keep track of how you spend TAG funds. In general, you must:

- Establish an accounting system and keep appropriate records.
- Submit reimbursement forms to EPA for the money to pay the technical advisor (each form must show that the group met the required 20 percent contribution).
- Prepare and submit quarterly progress reports to EPA.

TAG funds may be used to hire someone with the appropriate skills to administer the grant. However, to ensure that TAG funds are used primarily for the interpretation and communication of site-related technical data, these costs may not exceed 20 percent of the total TAG project costs.

**ADDITIONAL  
INFORMATION**



Your EPA Regional Office is ready to answer any questions that you may have. For further information, please contact your EPA Regional Office. Copies of the four booklets that together make up the *Superfund Technical Assistance Grant Handbook* are available free of charge by contacting the EPA Regional Office for your state (see map on back cover). The volume entitled *Superfund Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) Handbook: The Application Forms with Instructions* contains sample forms and instructions to assist you in preparing a TAG application.

**EPA Superfund Offices**

**EPA Headquarters**

Office of Emergency & Remedial  
Response (5203G)  
401 M Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20460  
(703) 603-8840

**EPA Region 1 (HPC-CAN7)**

John F. Kennedy Federal Building  
Boston, MA 02203  
(617) 223-5534  
Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts,  
New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

**EPA Region 2 (2-EPD)**

26 Federal Plaza  
New York, NY 10278  
(212) 264-7054  
New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico,  
Virgin Islands

**EPA Region 3 (3-EA-21)**

841 Chestnut Building  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
(215) 597-9817  
Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland,  
Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia

**EPA Region 4 (4WD-SSRB)**

345 Courtland Street, NE  
Atlanta, GA 30365  
(404) 347-2234  
Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky,  
Mississippi, North Carolina,  
South Carolina, Tennessee

**EPA Region 5 (P-19-J)**

77 West Jackson Boulevard  
Chicago, IL 60604-3507  
1-800-621-8431  
Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota,  
Ohio, Wisconsin

**EPA Region 6 (6H-MC)**

1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200  
Dallas, TX 75202-2733  
(214) 655-6617  
Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico,  
Oklahoma, Texas

**EPA Region 7 (PBAF)**

726 Minnesota Avenue  
Kansas City, KS 66101  
(913) 551-7003  
Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska

**EPA Region 8 (8 HWM-SM)**

999 18th Street, Suite 500  
Denver, CO 80202  
(303) 293-1870  
Colorado, Montana, North Dakota,  
South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming

**EPA Region 9 (H-1-1)**

75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
(415) 744-2175  
Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii,  
Nevada, American Samoa

**EPA Region 10 (HW-117)**

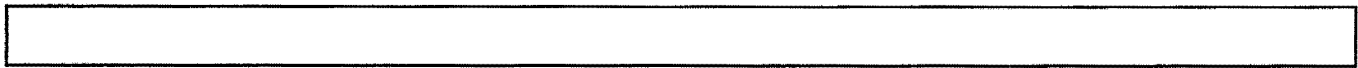
1200 Sixth Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98101  
(206) 553-1090  
Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Alaska

**Superfund/RCRA Hotline**

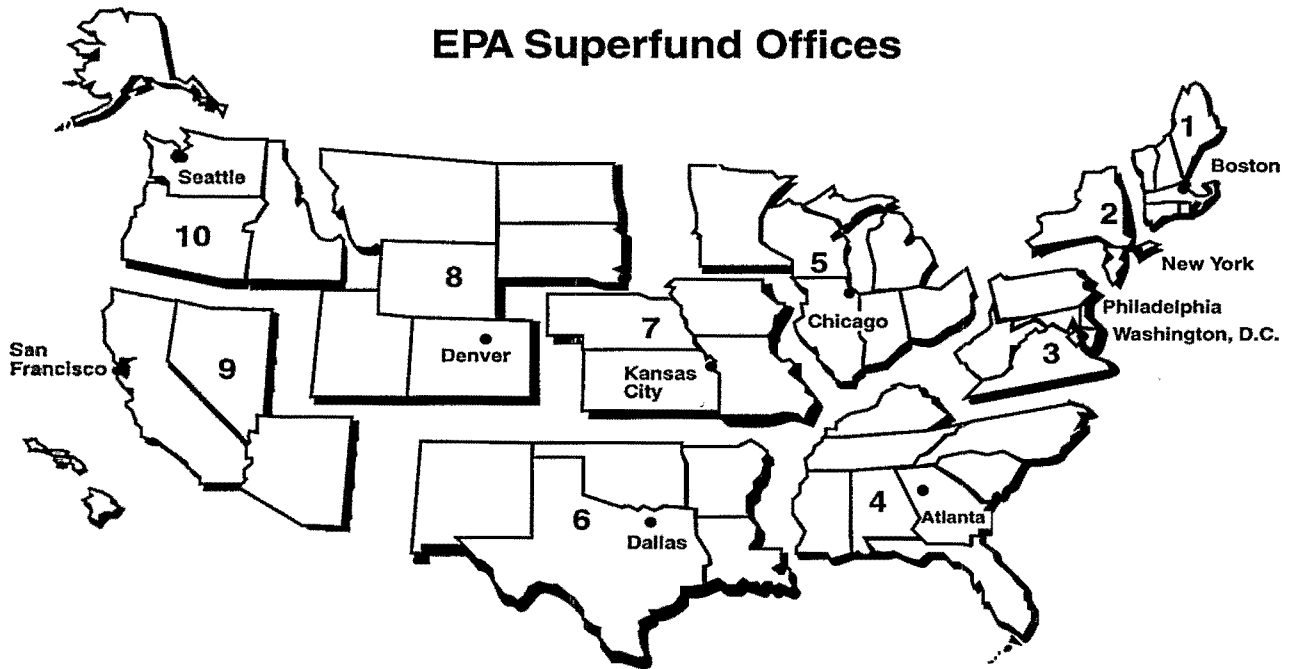
(800) 424-9346  
or (703) 920-9810 in the Washington, DC,  
metropolitan area (for information on  
programs)

**National Response Center**

(800) 424-8802 (to report releases of oil and  
hazardous substances)



## EPA Superfund Offices



United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency (5203G)  
Washington, DC 20460

Official Business  
Penalty for Private Use  
\$300