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Agency

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Office of Emergency and Remedial Response (5203G)



EPA Superfund Technical Assistance Grants (TAGs)

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WHAT ARE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS?



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. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), working together with the states, is responsible for administering the Superfund Program.

EPA believes it is important for communities to be involved in decisions related to nearby Superfund sites. For this reason, community outreach activities are underway at each of the 1,200 sites on the National Priorities List (NPL). The NPL is EPA's published list of the most serious hazardous waste sites that have been identified as potential threats to the environment.

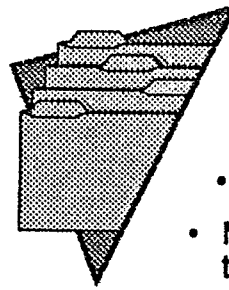
Decisions about a site cleanup usually are based on a range of technical information such as:

- Studies of site conditions.
- The kinds of wastes present at the site.
- The kinds of technology available for performing necessary cleanup actions.

Congress established the Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) Program in 1986 to help affected communities understand and comment on site-related information, and thus participate in cleanup decisions.

Basic Provisions of the TAG Program...

- Grants of up to \$50,000 are available to community groups for hiring technical advisors to help the community understand site-related technical information. Additional funding may be available for unusually large or complex sites.
- The group must contribute 20 percent of the total project costs to be supported by TAG funds. This requirement can be met with cash, donated supplies, and volunteered services.
- The group must prepare a plan for using the funds.
- There may be only one TAG award per NPL site.



USES OF TAGS

If your group is awarded a TAG, you may hire a technical advisor to:

- Review site-related documents.
- Meet with your group to explain technical information.
- Provide assistance in communicating your concerns about the site.
- Interpret technical information for the community.
- Participate in site visits, when possible, to gain a better understanding of cleanup activities.

You may also use TAG funds to hire a person to handle the administrative tasks related to the grant.

You may **not** use TAG funds to develop new information (for example, to conduct additional sampling) or to underwrite legal actions.



WHO MAY APPLY

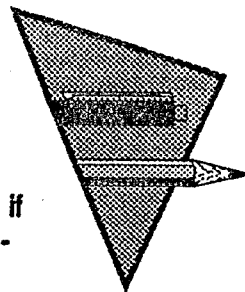
Groups eligible to receive grants under the TAG Program are those whose members may be affected by a release or threatened release of toxic wastes at any facility listed or proposed for listing on the NPL, and where preliminary site work has begun. In general, eligible groups are groups of individuals who live near the site and whose health, economic well-being, or enjoyment of the environment are directly threatened. A group applying for a TAG must be nonprofit and incorporated or working toward incorporation.

Groups **not** eligible for TAG awards are:

- Potentially responsible parties (people or companies potentially responsible for or contributing to the contamination problems at a site).
- Academic institutions.
- Political subdivisions.
- Groups, such as counties or cities, established or supported by government.

HOW TO APPLY

When applying for a TAG, you must provide information to EPA (or to your state, if it is administering the TAG Program), in order to determine if your group meets specific administrative and management requirements.

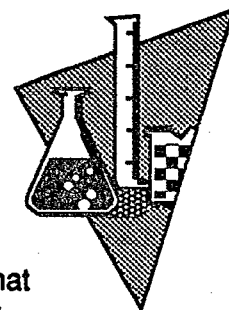


In general, you must demonstrate that you are aware of the time commitment, resources, and dedication needed to successfully manage a TAG.

If more than one group applies for the same TAG, they are encouraged to form a coalition to apply for the grant. This helps ensure that the largest number of people from your community are represented by the group in the event that a TAG is awarded.

CHOOSING A TECHNICAL ADVISOR

When choosing a technical advisor, your group should consider the kind of technical advice required and whether a prospective advisor has the variety of skills necessary to provide that advice. A technical advisor must have:



- Knowledge of hazardous or toxic waste issues and experience working on hazardous waste or toxic waste problems.
- Academic training in relevant scientific fields.
- Experience in making technical presentations and working with community groups.
- Good communication skills.

You may hire more than one technical advisor to obtain the combination of skills that you need, or hire a firm that has experience in all of the required areas.



HIRING A TECHNICAL ADVISOR

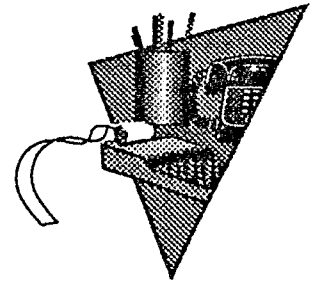
After evaluating its needs and estimating the costs of the services required, your group should seek candidates for the technical advisor position and evaluate any bids that are received.

Once a group selects an advisor, it develops a contract for signature by both parties. The contract should outline the work and cost involved, project time frame, and payment provisions. The *Superfund Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) Handbook: Procurement—Using TAG Funds* provides guidelines for selecting and hiring technical advisors.

MANAGING YOUR TAG

Groups must routinely record expenditures of grant money. In general, groups must:

- Establish an accounting system and keep appropriate records.
- Submit reimbursement forms to EPA for the money to pay the technical advisor.
- Prepare quarterly progress reports.



Your group may decide to hire a grant administrator to handle some or all of the administrative tasks. To ensure that TAG funds are used primarily for the interpretation and communication of site-related technical data, administrative costs may not exceed 20 percent of the total project costs.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Your EPA Regional Office is ready to answer any questions that you may have on the application process or any aspect of the TAG Program. A copy of the *Superfund TAG Handbook: The Application Forms with Instructions* is available free of charge by contacting the Superfund Office for your state.

EPA Superfund Offices

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Washington, DC 20460
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Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas*

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Kansas City, KS 66101
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*Iowa, Kansas, Missouri,
Nebraska*

EPA Region 2 (2-EPD)
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Virginia*

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San Francisco, CA 94105
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Hawaii, Nevada, American
Samoa*

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345 Courtland Street, NE
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Kentucky, Mississippi,
North Carolina, South
Carolina, Tennessee*

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1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101
(206) 553-6901
*Alaska, Idaho, Oregon,
Washington*

EPA Region 5 (P-19-J)
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604
1-800-621-8431
*Illinois, Indiana, Michigan,
Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin*

**Superfund/RCRA
Information Hotline**
(800) 424-9346, or (703) 920-
9810 in Washington, DC

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

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