CAGs, TAGs and TASC

Gowanus Canal Site

Brooklyn, NY

January 21, 2010
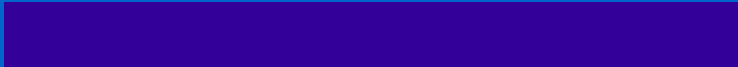
Community Advisory Groups
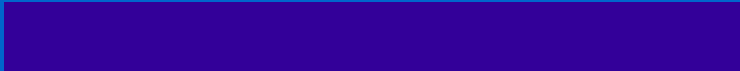
What is a community advisory group (CAG)?

- A CAG is made up of representatives of diverse community needs. It provides a public forum for community members to present and discuss their needs and concerns about the hazardous waste cleanup process and other environmental problems.

Benefits of Forming a CAG

- Forum for all interests in the community
- Opportunity to build trust
- Opportunity to build working relationships
- Central point of contact
- Better, more informed decisions about site cleanup and other environmental issues.

What does a CAG do?

- Holds meetings
- Reviews technical information about site cleanup and other environmental problems
- Meets with EPA to provide information on site issues
- Works with EPA to solve problems

Who can be in the CAG?

- The CAG should reflect:

  - members of the local community

  - diversity of racial, ethnic, and economic interests in the community.

  - residents and owners of residential property near the site;

  - others who may be directly affected by site releases;

Who can be in the CAG?

- The CAG should reflect:
  - local environmental or public interest groups;
  - local government units;
  - local labor representatives; and local businesses.
  - facility owners and other PRPs also may be included

Roles and Responsibilities of CAG Members

- Participate in CAG meetings
- Provide data and information to EPA on site issues
- Share information with community
- Represent their own views but also the views of the community at large

EPA's role in the CAG

- Attend meetings as needed

- Make site related documents available
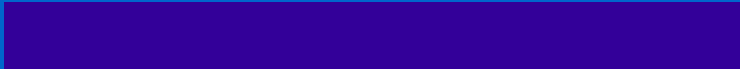
- Provide CAG with information and technical expertise

How do we get started?

- Write a letter to EPA indicating your interest in forming a CAG

- EPA will provide a facilitator to the community

- Facilitator will aid in the formation of the CAG

Technical Assistance Grants

What is a Technical Assistance Grant (TAG)?

- A TAG provides money ($50,000) to community groups so they can pay for technical advisors to interpret and explain technical reports, site conditions, and EPA's proposed cleanup proposals and decisions at Superfund sites.

Who can get a TAG?

- You are eligible if your group
  - members live near and may be affected by a superfund site
  - is representative of the affected community
  - is nonprofit and incorporated (made into a legal corporation in your state) or in the process of incorporating.

Who can not get a TAG?

- You are not eligible if your group:

  - is a potentially responsible party (PRP), represents a PRP, or receives money or services from a PRP;

  - is not incorporated (or willing to incorporate) for the specific purpose of representing affected people

  - is an academic institution

Who can not get a TAG?

- You are not eligible if your group:(cont'd)
    - is a political subdivision (example: township or municipality)
    - is affiliated with a national organization that has direct or indirect control over your group.

What can TAG funds be used for?

- TAG funds can be used to :
  - hire an independent technical advisor
  - pay a grant administrator to help manage and administer the grant.
  - to purchase or rent office supplies
  - print newsletters or fact sheets to disseminate information about your site.

Are there things we cannot spend TAG money for?

- Your TAG funds cannot be used for:
  - lawsuits or other legal actions;
  - political activity and lobbying;
  - social, ceremonial and amusement activities and related costs, including meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and tips;
  - group members' training and travel;

Are there things we cannot spend TAG money for?

- Your TAG funds cannot be used for: (cont'd)

  - generation of new primary data such as sampling and well drilling and testing;

  - reopening final EPA decisions such as the Record of Decision;

  - resolving disputes with EPA; or

  - epidemiological or health studies, such as urine or blood testing.

How Do We Apply for a TAG?

- Submit a Letter of Intent to the EPA's Region 2 Office

- The Letter of Intent should:

  – state that your group intends to apply for a TAG,

  – identify the name of your group and the site,

  – provide the name of a contact person with a daytime phone number.

What if more than one group wants to apply for a TAG?

- If your group is the first to send EPA a letter of intent, other interested groups will have 30 days to contact your group to form a coalition.

- If the groups cannot form a coalition, EPA will accept separate grant applications from all interested groups for an additional 30 day period.

How does EPA decide who gets the TAG?

- EPA reviews the TAG application
  - Goals
  - Plans for using the TAG funds
  - How the group plans to share information generated by the technical advisor
- Workplan
- Budget
- Time and resources

Finding a Qualified Technical Advisor

- EPA provides a list of sources
- Technical advisory must have the following qualifications:
  - Demonstrated knowledge of hazardous waste issues
  - College or university training in the relevant fields
 - Ability to communicate technical information to your community

Managing the TAG

- TAG recipient must:
    - Keep accurate financial records of how TAG funds and matching share are used
    - Ask EPA for reimbursement to pay technical advisor on time and in full
    - Prepare and give quarterly progress reports and other reports to EPA

Technical Assistance Services for Communities
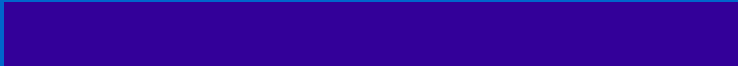
What Is TASC?

- Technical Assistance Services for Communities

- EPA-sponsored program

- Different than TAG program

- Services provided by E² Inc.

TASC Services

- Information Assistance
- Community Education
- Technical Expertise
- Technical Assistance Needs Evaluation and Plan Development
- Superfund Jobs Training Initiative

Information Assistance Examples

- Develop and disseminate fact sheets, brochures, primers, and summaries of detailed information
- Establish and maintain site/community-specific Web sites
- Prepare maps, diagrams, and other visual aids
- Develop outreach programs
- Translate documents into other languages

Community Education Examples

- Conduct community needs assessments
- Design training seminars and community workshops
- Produce training materials (handouts, manuals, computer-assisted learning, videos, audiovisuals)
- Teach and/or provide logistical support for training courses and workshops
- Provide just-in-time coaching to prepare and support community members to participate in meetings or decision-making processes

Technical Expertise Examples

- Review, summarize and explain technical meetings, reports, documents and other information

- Help communities formulate questions and draft comments on proposed environmental actions

- Support and facilitate community meetings and discussions between community members and other stakeholders

- Generate strategies and options for dealing with environmental problems for community consideration

Technical Assistance Needs Evaluation and Plan Development

- Assist communities with needs evaluations

- Develop technical assistance plans

- Assist communities with TAP applications

- Provide recommendations for technical advisors and implement the selection process

Superfund Job Training Initiative

- Provide training and employment opportunities for underserved citizens living near contaminated sites
- Provide participants with general employment skills as well as specific job skills needed to meet all job site employment requirements
- Place graduates in on-site entry-level remediation positions

TASC Technical Advisors

- A full range of disciplines on staff
- A network of experts contracting with E² Inc.
- Searches conducted to identify additional skill sets as needed
- Nationally located

Using TASC Contract – Community Responsibilities

- – Submit written request for assistance to region

- – Participate and attend meetings with contractor

- – Provide site background and current issues

- – Help establish project deadlines

- – Review contractor deliverables

Using TASC Contract – Contractor Role

TASC contractor may:

- Learn and represent the interests of community members

- Learn and foster community's trust and create collaborative environment

- Provide technical assistance to the community to facilitate or enhance the public's understanding

Information Available Online

CAG Information:

www.epa.gov/superfund/community/cag/resource.htm

TAG Information:

www.epa.gov/superfund/community/tag

TASC Information:

www.epa.gov/superfund/community/tasc/index.htm

For more information

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