TAG
Technical Assistance Grant
a Cleanup in Vulnerable Communities (CVCI)-funded program
Department of Toxic Substances Control

TAG Grant Guidelines

$2.5M in Grant Funding Available to Help California Community Organizations Who Want to Engage In the Cleanup Process of Contaminated Properties In Their Communities

November 2023

Amended, December 18, 2023

The California Department of Toxic Substances Control is proud to administer the **Technical Assistance Grant (TAG)** program to assist vulnerable communities actively participate in the monitoring of environmental cleanup activities that affect them.

This document contains information about the TAG program, eligible expenses, and how to apply.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 TAG Mission

The Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) program's mission is to provide grants to actively engage vulnerable and underserved communities in the Department of Toxic Substances Control's (DTSC's) Response Actions. The TAG program is part of the Cleanup in Vulnerable Communities Initiative (CVCI). CVCI is a $500-million initiative that aims to achieve environmental equity through fee reform structures and a series of funded projects that protect the people and environment of California with a focus on serving those most vulnerable.

1.2 TAG Vision

The TAG program's vision is to provide the tools the community needs to engage with decisions related to cleanup of sites, thus advancing environmental justice goals through concerted support and deep investment in vulnerable and underserved communities.

1.3 TAG Background

In 2021, Governor Gavin Newsom signed Senate Bill (SB) 158 (Chapter 73, Statutes of 2021), allocating $500 million for DTSC to address known or perceived contamination by investigating and cleaning up contaminated properties and for the establishment of several programs to fund cleanups and/or community engagement. All CVCI programs give priority to properties in historically vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. The TAG program, under CVCI, provides funding for communities to be engaged in decisions related to site cleanup.

The TAG program will provide approximately $2.5 million in grants for communities and Tribes affected by an active DTSC Cleanup Site[1] to hire independent Technical Advisors (TA) to assist with understanding and participating in Response Actions for the site.

This TAG Program Overview and Application Guide provides instructions to applicants for the completion of the TAG application, and outlines DTSC's process for selecting TAG grantees.

[1] *Please refer to Appendix D (Definitions) for definitions.*

1.4 TAG Resources

The following resources are available on the TAG website (**https://dtsc.ca.gov/tag/**):

- TAG Application
- Technical Assistance for applicants through support provided by the **Center for Creative Land Recycling**
- Webpage with **TAG Eligible Projects**
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1.5 Grant Description

The goal of the TAG program is to provide funds to eligible communities to become more involved and informed about Response Actions addressing the environmental challenges that these communities are faced with. Response Actions include activities performed to address a release or possible release of contamination at a property under DTSC oversight[2]. TAG funds can be used to fund services provided by independent TAs, including Community Science[3] projects under the general guidance of the TA, with the goal of effectively communicating technical information to communities and encouraging their involvement.

Applicants may apply for, and DTSC may award, grants ranging from $40,000 to $150,000[4] to pay for a TA to carry out any of the following:

- Assist in the interpretation of information on the nature of the hazard or potential hazard of a release or potential release of a hazardous material at a Cleanup Site.
- Assist in the interpretation of information related to a Cleanup Site, including environmental statutes, policies, and guidance documents; as well as documents produced as part of a site investigation or any other type of Response Action for a release (or potential release), including the operation and maintenance of a Response Action[5].
- Communicate the regulatory process including site investigations, risk assessments, and cleanups, to the community.

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[2] Only cleanup sites under DTSC oversight are eligible for TAG.
[3] Community Science is defined as scientific work undertaken by members of the general public in collaboration with, or under the direction of professional scientists. Community Science provides community members an educational component as well as the opportunity to ask their own questions, participate in the collection of community confirmation sampling, and advocate for themselves.
[4] The upper range of grant awards will be given to applicants that propose a work plan that includes Community Confirmation Sampling.
[5] Draft Work Plans and Reports for the Cleanup Site will be available for review upon request as they will be in development.

- Attend public meetings related to the Cleanup Site and provide summaries to the community.
- Assist grantee and community in drafting language for outreach material(s).
- Convey scientific approaches and principles used as part of site investigations and cleanups to improve the community's understanding of regulatory actions.
- Interpret and explain chemical exposures and/or risks associated with contaminants.
- Translate complex technical and scientific information into terms that are understandable to a person without a technical or scientific background.
- Conduct Community Confirmation Sampling related to a release or potential release of a hazardous substance at a Cleanup Site. Community Confirmation Sampling is designed to ensure that site-related contamination has not migrated beyond the Cleanup Site boundary, to confirm that the site has been properly characterized and its boundaries adequately delineated, and/or that it has been cleaned up to applicable cleanup levels. For example, confirmation samples can be collected by the TA or can be collected as split samples by the Responsible Party's consultant or DTSC staff working on the project, as directed by the community. All sampling activities will require voluntary consent (permission) from the site owner and/or Responsible Party. See Appendix B for additional information on Community Confirmation Sampling.
- Develop and facilitate Community Science programs for the grantee and interested community members that are consistent with the requirements of the statutory language for the TAG program in order to improve knowledge and understanding of environmental actions and impacts.
- Conduct perimeter site tours (of the Cleanup Site) and/or laboratory tours (when approved by the site owner or laboratory, as applicable) and provide education and demonstrations to community members on how sampling equipment is used.
- Observe and receive "split samples" under strict chain of custody protocols, to be analyzed by a certified independent laboratory of the grantee's choosing, to independently confirm sampling activities overseen by DTSC.
- Recommend to DTSC on-site[6] soil sampling locations where additional sampling should be conducted. DTSC will decide if the recommended locations will be requested to the Responsible Party. The TA may, with the permission from the

[6] *"On-site" refers to within the known Cleanup Site boundaries. "Off-site" refers to outside of the known Cleanup Site boundaries.*

Site's Responsible Party(ies), observe DTSC's on-site sampling activities or collect samples on-site, following standard quality assurance protocols and data quality objectives, to be analyzed by a certified independent laboratory of the grantee's choosing.

- Conduct or recommend off-site[6] soil sampling locations. If the TA receives voluntary consent (permission) from the property owners, whether private parties (private land) or governmental entities (public land), off-site sampling that follows quality assurance protocols and data quality objectives can be conducted including (but not limited to):
  - > Sampling of garden soils and/or residential yards that may have been impacted by the Cleanup Site;
  - > Indoor air sampling following DTSC guidance for indoor air sampling;
  - > Surface/stormwater runoff monitoring;
  - > Monitoring to confirm that any controls established for the project are adequately functioning (i.e. ensuring contaminated soil stockpiles are adequately covered, fences are maintained, etc.);
  - > Perimeter air monitoring – dust, volatile organic compounds, and/or odors;
  - > Monitoring of potentially contaminated soil moved off-site from truck traffic from the Cleanup Site or "Track out" monitoring.

2.0 TAG ELIGIBILITY OVERVIEW

2.1 Eligible Applicants

An eligible applicant must be a community group or organization that meets criterion #1 OR #2 below. All applicants must meet criterion #3.

1. The applicant is a qualified 501(c)(3) non-profit or has a fiscal sponsor[7] and has submitted the following through Fluxx[8]:
   - Three letters of support from community members confirming that the applicant is a member of the community and supporting the applicant's

[6] "On-site" refers to within the known Cleanup Site boundaries. "Off-site" refers to outside of the known Cleanup Site boundaries.
[7] Fiscal sponsorship is a relationship that allows a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (the sponsor) to bestow its tax-exempt status and certain administrative benefits onto a non-tax-exempt group or entity (the sponsored partner) by way of a contractual relationship. Additional information regarding fiscal sponsorship will be available on the TAG website.
[8] Fluxx is DTSC's grant application online portal. Appendix E provides tips to navigate Fluxx.

grant application; OR a petition with a minimum of 10 signatures from community members indicating their support for the applicant's grant application[9].

- Letter of Intent to apply for a TAG. The Letter of Intent must include the name, email address, daytime telephone number, and postal address of a contact person on behalf of the applicant group and include information about the group's intent to apply for a grant. DTSC will post the Letter of Intent in a local newspaper and/or electronic forms of communication to [Amended, 12/18/23] inform the rest of the community that your group is interested in applying for a TAG. The ~~newspaper~~ notice will also explain that other groups in your community interested in applying for a TAG may contact your group and join your team or may submit their own Letter of Intent. Other groups in your community then have 15 days to get in touch with your group to discuss working together to submit one application to DTSC as a coalition; otherwise they can submit their own Letter of Intent. After the 15-day period, interested groups will have 30 days to submit applications. If more than one Letter of Intent is received for the same Cleanup Site, DTSC will rank the applications based on scoring criteria, as discussed in Section 3.4 (Verification).

2. The applicant is a Tribe, regardless of federal recognition, that is culturally, regionally, or traditionally affiliated with lands or resources of California, including those listed on the California Tribal Consultation List maintained by the California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC).

    - Tribes must also submit three letters of support OR 10 signatures from community members (as described above). Alternatively, tribes may instead submit a letter from a tribal council, village council, tribal business committee or equivalent.

    - Tribes must also submit a letter of intent to apply for a TAG (as described above).

3. All applicants must list in their application a Grant Manager[10] that lives in the community that is affected[11] by the Cleanup Site.

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[9] Letters of support and petition signatures must be from community members that live within 5 miles of the Cleanup Site, who are at least 18 years old, and live at different addresses. The letters of support and petitions must include residence addresses of community member signatories.

[10] A Grant Manager is an individual that manages the grant, acts as the main contact for the grant, is responsible for ensuring that schedules are met, corresponds with DTSC, manages the budget, writes reports, and oversees the community group.

[11] A "community affected by the Cleanup Site" refers to a community that is subject to an actual or potential health, economic, or environmental threat resulting from the Cleanup Site.

2.2 Not Eligible to Apply

The following groups, entities, or individuals are not eligible to apply for TAG funding:

- Government entities.
- An entity that has caused or contributed to any releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances at the Cleanup Site (including current or past owners/ operators).
- Anyone affiliated with any other person or entity that is potentially liable for the contamination at the Cleanup Site. Affiliations include familial, contractual (does not include deeds or arrangements related to potential purchase), financial, or corporate relationships that are the result of a reorganization of a business entity with potential liability. This applies to all parcels that are part of the Cleanup Site.
- Individuals (must apply as a community group).

2.3 Eligible Sites

Each applicant will be applying for a grant associated with one specific DTSC Cleanup Site (site). Only one grant will be awarded per site. Eligible sites must meet the following criteria:

- Site must be an active DTSC Cleanup Site. Active DTSC Cleanup Sites can be found using **EnviroStor**. Active sites are sites currently under DTSC Cleanup Program oversight, in investigation, cleanup or operation and maintenance phases.

2.4 Eligible Communities

The following criteria must be met:

- Each applicant represents a community that is affected[12] by the Cleanup Site and is located within a 5-mile radius of the site.
- Each applicant must submit a description of how the community is affected by the Cleanup Site.
- One or more of the following must apply:
  - The community has a CalEnviroScreen (CES) score of 75% or higher, thus representing areas with the highest pollution burdens.

[12] *See footnote 11 for definition of a "community affected by a Cleanup Site".*

- The community has a CES poverty percentage of 50% or greater regardless of the total CES score.
- The community is a tribal community, regardless of federal recognition, that is culturally, regionally, or traditionally affiliated with lands or resources of California, including those listed on the California Tribal Consultation List maintained by the California NAHC.
- Special circumstances: If none of the above criteria are met and/or no CES score is available, the community must demonstrate reasons it is disadvantaged and underserved (e.g. climate change vulnerability, food desert, lack of medical facilities, recent[13] natural disasters, etc.). Communities demonstrating special circumstances may be found eligible at DTSC's sole discretion.

Please visit the TAG website for an **interactive web tool that shows TAG Eligible Projects.** TAG Eligible Projects are Cleanup Sites that meet the criteria listed in this section.

2.5 Eligible Activities and Costs

The following activities and costs (#1 through #7) are eligible for reimbursement with TAG funding:

1. Costs incurred under a contract with a TA, who meets the qualifications listed in Appendix A, to carry out one or more of the tasks listed in Section 1.5 of this guidance.
2. Costs associated with sampling activities (e.g., equipment rental, laboratory analysis) that are led by the TA but may not be included in the TA contract.
3. Costs incurred under contracts for activities associated with community engagement and language accessibility such as:
   - Obtaining a facilitator to lead community meetings to discuss site
   - Cost of a booth at community events (e.g. farmers market, fairs, etc.)
   - Development of fact sheets or other educational materials
   - Translation of materials
   - Hiring of interpreters for events or meetings
4. Other costs for activities conducted by the grantee such as community

[13] *Within the last 3 years.*

engagement, procurement, grant administration, reporting, website maintenance, etc. collectively are not to exceed 20% of the total grant award.

5. Rental of meeting space.
6. Printing costs and postage.
7. Travel costs (for TA or other contractor) to attend meetings and/or site visits such as mileage for use of personal vehicles, parking receipts, or public transportation.

2.6 Advance Payments

An applicant meeting the minimum criteria required by Government Code section 11019.1 can submit a request for Advance Payment (up to 25% of the grant amount) to complete activities that will allow them to start the proposed tasks. Advance Payment refers to a payment in advance of the expense being incurred; such a request must include estimates of costs, among other documentation (visit **https://www.dtsc.ca.gov/tag/** for more information).

Requests for Advance Payments will be submitted with the application during the application process and are available to applicants that are a 501(c)(3) organization that can demonstrate good standing with the Internal Revenue Service. Advance Payments are only available on grants awarded prior to April 30, 2025. Advance Payments are limited to the minimum immediate cash requirements necessary to carry out the purpose of the grant project, as determined by DTSC, and subject to DTSC's approval of the applicant's work plan
and written justification. Actual receipts for the expenses must be submitted within 30 days after the expense is incurred.

The following are examples of costs eligible for Advance Payment:

- Reatianer for TA costs
- Initial bank deposit to establish account, if needed
- Space rental for public meetings
- Grantee public noticing grant related activities and meetings

2.7 Ineligible Activities and/or Costs

The following activities cannot be funded with TAG funds:

- Lawsuits or other legal actions.
- Attorney fees.

- The time for your TA to assist an attorney in preparing a legal action or preparing and serving as an expert witness at any legal proceeding.
- Political activity and lobbying.
- Tuition or other training expenses for your group's members or your TA.
- Social activities, fundraising or amusements.
- Receiving technical assistance on non-Response Action related issues.
- Independent (without the community's input) preparation and submission of technical comments on behalf of the community.
- Collection of new health data for the purposes of medical testing and developing medical studies.
- Proposal or grant preparation.
- Markup from a prime contractor for subcontracts or other direct costs.
- Budget contingency or unallocated funding.
- Any activity except those approved in the TAG Agreement.

3.0 APPLICATION

To simplify and streamline the TAG application process, DTSC has a subscription to Fluxx, a grant management platform that houses the TAG application, post-award grant information, and a process to comply with grantee reporting requirements including agreements, quarterly reports, reimbursement requests, and amendments. The TAG application must be completed online in Fluxx. Applicants will create an account with a username and password.

3.1 Required Documents for the Application

The following documents will need to be submitted with the application:

- Proof of 501(c)(3) non-profit status
- Fiscal sponsorship contract (if applicable)
- Letter of intent
- Letters of support (3), or petition (10 signatures)

3.2 Required Information for the Application

The following information should be available when completing the application as it will be needed to respond to the application questions:

- Applicant contact information
- Site **EnviroStor** number
- Community eligibility summary (**CalEnviroScreen** score and other applicable descriptions)
- TAG work plan, budget, and estimated implementation schedule
- Description of your group's approach to community engagement
- Description of your group's ability to manage the grant

3.3 Application Questions

The application sections are listed below and described in the following sections:

3.3.1 Eligibility

3.3.2 Application Contacts and Project Team

3.3.3 Site Information

3.3.4 TAG Work Plan and Budget Detail

3.3.5 Community Description and Engagement (approach to community engagement)

3.3.6 Applicant's Capacity to Manage the Grant

3.3.7 Advance Payment Request

3.3.8 Additional Information

3.3.9 Signature & Attestations

3.3.1 Eligibility

- Applicant is: (select one)
  - > Representative of a community group; or
  - > Representative of a tribe.

- Community is a tribe or is considered disadvantaged (select all that apply):
  - > Tribal community
  - > Community has a CES percentile >75
  - > Community has a CES poverty rate >50
  - > Other: Is disadvantaged for other reasons not reflected on CES.

If selecting "other", include a description of 500 words or less that describes why the applicant considers the community disadvantaged including data from CES or similar (such as United States Environmental Protection Agency's (US EPA's) **EJScreen**). In accordance with article 1, section 31 of the California Constitution, DTSC will not consider data relating to race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in exercising its discretion to award a grant to an applicant selecting "other".

3.3.2 Application Contacts and Project Team

- Applicant's name, contact information, and role
- Grant Manager's name and contact information (if different than applicant) (NOTE: Grant Manager must live in the community or **TAG Eligible Project** area)
- List other team members, contact information, and roles.

3.3.3 Site Information

- Site Name
- **EnviroStor** number
- Address

3.3.4 TAG Work Plan and Budget Detail

When applying for TAG, the applicant must complete a budget table by selecting eligible tasks, an estimated timeline, and the budget amount. There are five general tasks to select from:

- Technical Advisor
- Laboratory costs
- Activities conducted by the grantee

- Community engagement and language accessibility
- Other (activities that do not fit under the categories listed above)

Description of the activities that can be performed under each task are listed in Appendix C for your information. Once a grant is awarded, grantees can use Appendix C to describe the activity that they plan to fund with the grant under each task . These activities will represent the work plan for the grant. [Amended, 12/18/23]

Table 1 is blank and presents the information that will be required to complete this section of the application; however, the input of this information will be guided in Fluxx.

Table 1. Task, Budget, and Timeline

		Timeline (Approx.)	
Task	**Budget**	**Start**	**End**
Technical Advisor			
Laboratory Costs			
Activities Conducted by the Grantee			
Community Engagement and Language Accessibility			
Other			
Total			

In narrative form, using Table 1. Task, Budget and Timeline above, as well as Appendix C of the Guidelines, in 500 words or less, describe how you plan to utilize the grant funds. Provide a description of activities that you plan to perform under each task you are requesting funding for. Your description should explain your plan activities and why you have selected those activities. If awarded, grantees will need to submit a final workplan as a deliverable within 60 days of execution of the Grant Agreement. [Amended, 12/18/23]

3.3.5 Community description and engagement

In narrative form, applicants will:

- In 350 words or less, describe the community, including demographic information on the languages spoken in the community, community education levels, and other factors that will inform applicant's outreach to the community. Also include what makes this community disadvantaged (beyond the CES score number). The description may include, but is not limited to, ways in which the community is disproportionately affected by environmental pollution or other hazards, and/or a description of the community with respect to concentrations of people that are of low income, high unemployment, low levels of homeownership, high rent burden, sensitive populations, or low levels of educational attainment.

- In 350 words or less, describe the applicant's knowledge about the Cleanup Site, the community's general concerns, and how the Technical Advisor will help with these concerns.
- In 350 words or less, describe how the grant will increase community involvement and knowledge related to the Cleanup Site, and the cleanup process generally.
- In 350 words or less, describe how the grant will help reduce the impacts of environmental injustices.
- In 350 words or less and using Table 2 as an example, describe how the grantee will conduct community engagement and describe the specific steps your group will take to share information collected in your TAG project with the rest of the community (public meetings, newsletters, website, information library, etc.). The grantee must demonstrate that its outreach efforts will provide for language access that is applicable to the languages most commonly used in the affected community. This will become your Community Engagement Plan. Table 2 should include a list of the major activities or work products that your group will conduct or produce during the grant period. An example of an activity is provided below.

Table 2. Community Engagement Plan

Activity/Product Produced	Timeline	Outcome
Example: Recruit community members to be part of the coalition by sending out emails, flyers and door knocking	By the 5th month of the grant	Coalition is formed
Example: Monthly educational meetings with residents to explain the cleanup process for the Cleanup Site.	Monthly, starting the 6th month of the grant	Increase residents knowledge about the cleanup.
Example: Public workshop to solicit and provide public comments on the Cleanup Site.	At the release of the remedial action plan	Community feedback is presented and submitted to the DTSC project manager.

3.3.6 Applicant's capacity to manage the grant

In a narrative of 500 words or less, applicants will describe the group's capacity to manage the grant and meet the requirements of the grant on time. Include the name of the person(s) that will be responsible for the administration of the grant (Grant Manager), the Grant Manager's prior experience with grants, and the applicant entity's procedures for record keeping and financial accountability related to managing the grant. If the Grant Manager has limited grant experience, describe other experience that will allow them to successfully meet the required tasks.

3.3.7 Advance Payment Request (if applicable)

If the applicant is requesting Advance Payment, note that there are specific requirements per Government Code section 11019.1 that must be met in order to qualify for Advance Payment. These requirements will be listed in the Advance Payment application, available at **https://dtsc.ca.gov/tag/**, on December 2023 if you choose to request Advance Payment.

i. Provide an itemized budget, spending timeline, and workplan developed in a form and manner specified by the administering state agency.

ii. Submit documentation, as required by the administering state agency, to support the need for advanced payment, which may include, but is not be limited to, invoices, contracts, estimates, payroll records, and financial records.

iii. Demonstrate good standing with the Internal Revenue Service.

iv. Obtain insurance, if required by the administering state agency and stipulated within the grant agreement.

v. Deposit any funds received as an advance payment into a federally insured, interest-bearing account that provides the ability to track interest earned and withdrawals. Any accumulated interest shall be deemed to be grant moneys, subject to federal laws and regulations, and the recipient shall report interest earned on the advanced payment to the administering state agency.

vi. Establish procedures to minimize the amount of time that elapses between the transfer of funds and the spend down of those funds by the recipient or subrecipient. Further advance payments shall not be made until a grantee is able to demonstrate that all previously advanced funds have been spent down or a plan is in place to ensure spend down of those funds in a timely manner.

vii. Provide progress reports on the spend down of advanced funds no less than on a quarterly basis. The administering state agency may require progress reports on the spend down of advanced funds. All unused funding provided as an advance payment, but not spent down within the grant timeline, shall be returned to the state.

viii. Provide a progress report to the administering state agency following the expenditure of an advance payment that includes a summary or work completed, proof of expenditure, and other associated information.

For additional stipulations please refer to Government Code section 11019.1.

3.3.8 Additional Information

The applicant has the option to provide critical information on the application that may not be reflected through responses to the questions and requested information. If this is the case, this section may be completed to provide DTSC with additional helpful context.

3.3.9 Signature and Attestations

In order to be eligible for funding and to submit a completed application, all applicants will attest or agree to the following:

- Applicant attests that the signatory is a representative of the community or Tribe affected by an active Cleanup Site, and certifies to the best of their knowledge and belief that the information contained in this Application, including any attachments, is true and complete and accurately describes the Applicant, the Cleanup Site, and related conditions. The applicant attests that the Grant Manager resides within 5 miles of the relevant Cleanup Site.
- Applicant agrees to abide by the TAG Agreement if awarded.
- Applicant attests that Applicant has read, understands, and agrees to comply with the "Conflict of Interest" provisions set forth in the TAG Agreement. Applicant attests that no such conflict of interest exists. (Examples of conflict of interest include, but are not limited to, hiring a family member of one of the grantee members as TA, making any other use of TAG funding for personal or family gain, or having an affiliation with a responsible party or any other party with a financial interest in the Site).
- Applicant agrees to promptly inform DTSC of any changes that occur in the information contained in this Application.
- Applicant acknowledges that DTSC must comply with the California Public Records Act (PRA) (Gov. Code section 7920.000 et seq.), which may require DTSC to release information regarding this application or site in response to PRA requests that DTSC receives from the public, and that DTSC will protect the confidentiality of personal information provided in this Application only to the extent authorized by law and necessary to accomplish a lawful purpose of DTSC.

- Applicant consents that DTSC has the right to distribute, transmit, publish, or copy, in any medium, either in whole or in part: information, photographs, or drawings DTSC obtains pursuant to TAG for any use, including, but not limited to, project documentation, public outreach, web and social media content, and marketing materials. This does not apply to information that contains confidential business information.

3.4 Verification

Applications will be verified for completeness, as defined in Table 3. The application will be split into four categories: (1) Eligibility; (2) Budget, Work Plan and Timeline; (3) Community Description and Engagement; and (4) Capacity to Manage Grant. The Eligibility category will be reviewed to verify that applicants are eligible to receive a grant. The other three categories will be scored on a pass/fail basis. If two applications are received for one site, then applications will be scored and ranked. To pass a category, the application must receive at least 50% of the maximum point value. Each category must receive a passing score in order for the application to pass overall.

Table 3. Application Verification

Category	Point Value	Criteria for Verification
(1) Eligibility	No points — Applicant must meet eligibility	• Applicant is: (one of the following applies) > Representative of a community*; or > Representative of a tribe. * *Community groups must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit (or fiscal sponsor must be a 510(c)(3) nonprofit).* • Community is affected by an active Cleanup Site: > Active DTSC Cleanup Site located within a 5-mile radius. • Community is a tribe or is considered disadvantaged (select all that apply): > Tribal community > Community has a CalEnviroScreen percentile >75 > Community has a poverty rate >50 > Other: Is disadvantaged for other reasons not reflected on CalEnviroScreen. If selecting "other," include a description of 500 words or less that describes why the applicant considers the community disadvantaged including data from CalEnviroScreen or similar (such as US EPA's EJScreen). • Proper paperwork was submitted for Advance Payment (as applicable)

(2) Budget, work plan, and timeline	50 points 25 points are required to pass this category Budget is worth 20 points, Work Plan is worth 20 points, Timeline is worth 10 points	• Is the proposed budget justifiable based on work plan tasks? • Are the work plan tasks achievable within the timeline proposed? • Do the work plan tasks fit under the scope of the grant? • Are the work plan tasks, budget and timeline consistent with each other? • Are the work plan tasks in general alignment with activities occurring on the DTSC Cleanup Site?
(3) Community description and engagement	30 points 15 points are required to pass this category Each question in Section 3.3.5 will be worth 6 points.	• Is the community adequately described (including a description of lanuages spoken and other demographic factors affecting outreach)? • Does the applicant describe why the community is concerned about the site and how the Technical Advisor will help with these concerns? • Response describes how the applicant will encourage public participation. • Response indicated how the grant will help reduce the impacts of environmental injustices. • Does the applicant have a plan to communicate information to the group and surrounding community? Does the applicant provide a plan for providing lanugage accessibility?

(4) Capacity to manage grant	20 points 10 points are required to pass this category	• Response includes description of demonstrated record-keeping and financial accountability mechanisms that will help the applicant manage the grant. • Response includes a description of the Grant Manager's and (if applicable) other members of the applicant entity's experience with grant management. If the Grant Manager has limited grant experience, includes description of other experience that will allow them to successfully meet the required tasks. • Response discusses plan for budget, work plan and timeline management. Applicant has a plan in place that will allow activities to stay on budget, on time and in-scope.

4.0 GRANT AGREEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

4.1 TAG Agreement

Once an application is selected for an award, a TAG Agreement will be developed. The applicant then becomes a "grantee." The TAG Agreement will incorporate various elements of the TAG application either by reference or by attaching as exhibits. The TAG Agreement specifies terms and conditions of the funding. If awarded, the TAG Agreement will need to be signed by the applicant within 30 days of the grant award email notification of award. Signature affirms that the recipient agrees with the terms and conditions of the award. The TAG Agreement will contain specific terms of the grant. In the event of a conflict between the TAG Program Overview and Application Guide and the TAG Agreement, the TAG Agreement will take precedence.

4.2 Application Deadlines and Funding Period

Applications must be submitted no later than January 15, 2025. All environmental work must be completed by January 15, 2027. Funding period will be dependent on the application and award date. All final invoices must be submitted by March 1, 2027.

4.3 Prevailing Wages and Diverse Suppliers

Projects that receive an award of public funds, and which involve construction, alteration, demolition, installation, or repair work over $1,000, are considered "public works" projects subject to prevailing wage laws. (See Chapter 1 of Part 7 of Division 2 of the California Labor Code, commencing with Section 1720 and Title 8, California Code of Regulations, Chapter 8, Subchapter 3, commencing with Section 16000.)

Projects deemed to be "public works" require, among other things, the payment of prevailing wages, which can be significantly higher than non-prevailing wages.

When a TAG Grantee contracts with a TA to perform sampling activities (soil sampling, soil vapor sampling, indoor air sampling, and/or groundwater sampling), the TAG project may be considered a "public works" project. All TAG Grantees who hire a TA to conduct sampling activities are fully responsible for determining if their project is a "public work" and complying with all California public works requirements, if applicable. If a TAG Grantee determines that their project does entail "public work," then the contract with the TA must require the TA to comply with all California public works requirements. Please note that a properly qualified technical advisor's review and preparation of written materials and attendance at meetings is not subject to prevailing wage.

DTSC has requested a written determination from the Director of the California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) regarding whether sampling activities that a TAG grantee might hire a TA to perform would be deemed a "public works" project subject to prevailing wage laws. DTSC will share the DIR Director's determination with grantees. However, grantees remain responsible for determining if their own project is a "public works" project and, if so, complying with all applicable requirements.

The DIR is responsible for administering and enforcing public works requirements and prevailing wage laws. More information about public works requirements and prevailing wage laws can be found on the DIR's website at the following links: Public Works (**https://www.dir.ca.gov/Public-Works/PublicWorks.html**) ; Frequently Asked Questions on Public Works (**https://www.dir.ca.gov/public-works/publicworkssb854faq.html**); Awarding Bodies (**https://www.dir.ca.gov/Public-Works/Awarding-Bodies.html**); and Prevailing Wage Requirements (**https://www.dir.ca.gov/Public-Works/Prevailing-Wage.html**).

Any questions regarding compliance with public works requirements and prevailing wage laws should be addressed to the DIR at **publicworks@dir.ca.gov** or (833) 526-4636.

Diverse Suppliers: Applicants are encouraged to conduct inclusive outreach to diverse suppliers such as disabled veteran-owned, disadvantaged business enterprises, or small business enterprises.

4.4 TAG Reimbursement Process

TAG is a reimbursement-based grant. To manage internal resources effectively, DTSC requires grantees to submit invoices to DTSC. These invoices must be for work that has already been conducted, but they do not have to have been paid. Invoices must be submitted in batches of a minimum of $1,000. Once approved, grantees will receive a check from the State Controller's Office in about 90 days. Additionally, DTSC will not reimburse interest, penalties, taxes resulting from the grant award, or fines.

TAG reimburses grantees for eligible costs incurred directly by the grantee. Grantees will be authorized to "spend" starting on the date the TAG Agreement is signed by DTSC. Costs incurred before the TAG Agreement is executed are not eligible for reimbursement.

If grantees do not request reimbursement within the initial eight months of the TAG Agreement, the TAG budget may be subject to redistribution and the grant terminated.

4.5 Invoice Requirements

Invoices should include the following:

- List of personnel that charged time during the reporting period
- Hours spent by personnel
- Hourly rate of personnel
- Corresponding tasks for charges
- Itemized list of material expenditures (e.g., sampling equipment rental, laboratory costs, printing costs, room reservation fees)
- Invoices should be organized by costs associated with the Technical Advisor contract and costs expended directly by the grantee. As discussed further in Appendix C, activities conducted by the grantee are not to exceed 20% of the grant total.

4.6 Reporting Requirements

The grantee shall submit progress reports to update DTSC on grant activities:

- Grantee shall provide quarterly progress reports summarizing the spend down of funds, grant activities performed during the reporting period, adherence to timeline, and proposed plan for activities that will be performed during the next quarter. Please note that DTSC may request additional progress reports to track the grant. Please also note that advance payment funds should be included in progress reports, but should be tracked separately from general grant funds.
- Grantee shall provide a progress report to DTSC following the full expenditure of an Advance Payment that includes a summary of work completed, proof of expenditure, and other associated information.
- Upon grant completion, the grantee shall provide a close-out report, discussed further in Section 4.8.

4.7 Technical Assistance

DTSC has contracted a Technical Assistance Provider (TAP), the Center for Creative Land Recycling (**CCLR**), a non-profit that specializes in brownfields and land recycling support. CCLR can help applicants navigate this document, evaluate if a community is likely eligible for TAG, and answer additional questions regarding the program. CCLR can also provide application assistance. Contact CCLR through the **TAG website** to schedule your appointment now.

4.8 Close-Out Procedures

Grantee shall provide DTSC notice of intent to close-out the grant when the TAG activities have been completed. Grant activities cannot be invoiced after March 1, 2027 and a close-out form must be submitted by this date.

Within 60 days of submitting the notice to close-out, Grantee shall submit a close-out report, summarizing all actions taken, the resources committed, and any lessons learned completing the TAG activities. The close-out report shall document that the TAG activities were performed in accordance with the TAG Agreement.

Unless DTSC authorizes an extension, the grantee must pay all bills related to the TAG by April 30, 2027. The grantee must return to DTSC within 15 days of April 30, 2027 any unused funds provided as an Advance Payment, but not spent down within the grant timeline, per Gov. Code 11019.1(d)(3)(B).

4.9 Termination and Failure to Comply with TAG Agreement

DTSC or the grant recipient have the ability to terminate the TAG Agreement as described below.

4.9.1 Circumstances Under Which Community Group May Terminate TAG Agreement

The grant recipient may terminate the TAG Agreement by sending DTSC written notification explaining the reasons for the desire to terminate the TAG Agreement and the effective date. The community group/grantee will need to return unused Advance Payment funds within 15 business days of notification.

4.9.2 Failure to Comply with TAG Agreement

DTSC can take the following actions if the grant recipient fails to comply with the terms and conditions of the TAG Agreement:

- Temporarily withhold payments until the deficiency is corrected;
- Not reimburse for all or part of the activity or action not in compliance;
- Wholly or partly "suspend" the award;
- Withhold further awards (funding) for the project;
- Require immediate return of unused Advance Payment funds;
- Take enforcement action;
- Place special conditions in the TAG Agreement; and
- Take other remedies that may be legally available.

APPENDIX A: TECHNICAL ADVISOR

A Technical Advisor is a person that meets the qualifications listed below who will provide the grantee with an unbiased, independent review of Cleanup Site-related information. Technical Advisors should be qualified in areas related to the type of contamination and specific issues relevant to the Cleanup Site.

Key qualifications of a Technical Advisor:

- Demonstrated knowledge of hazardous or toxic waste issues, or public health issues as those issues relate to hazardous substances/toxic waste.
- Academic training in a relevant discipline (for example, biochemistry, toxicology, public health, environmental sciences, engineering, environmental law and planning, or a related area).
- Ability to translate environmental technical information into terms that are understandable to a person without a technical or scientific background.
- Experience writing and interpreting environmental technical documents.
- Strong communication skills.
- Experience leading community meetings.
- Experience working with disadvantaged communities.
- Ability to understand environmental statutes and regulatory guidance.
- Experience communicating with regulatory government agencies.
- If Community Confirmation Sampling is part of the Technical Advisor's scope of work, a bachelor's degree in a relevant discipline (for example, biochemistry, toxicology, public health, environmental sciences, engineering, environmental law and planning, or a related area) is required for staff that oversees sampling (whether the Technical Advisor or subcontractor).
- If Community Confirmation Sampling is part of the Technical Advisor's scope of work, environmental sampling experience and training specific to the requirements in the State of California is required.
- 40-hour Hazardous Waste Operations (HAZWOPER) training certification if there is participation in on-site sampling activities or site visits during active environmental work.

Where to find a Technical Advisor:

- University's science, engineering, or planning departments (depending on the focus)
- Professional and technical organizations and groups
- Environmental groups
- Trade journals
- Environmental conferences
- State and local health departments
- Search engine (online)
- Environmental consulting firms
- Local environmental non-profits
- Online environmental forums
- Other TAG recipients

Note: DTSC reserves the right to request proof of qualifications for the Technical Advisor prior to reimbursing the grantee for Technical Advisor expenses.

APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY SCIENCE AND COMMUNITY CONFIRMATION SAMPLING

TAG Community Science and Community Confirmation Sampling allows for the participation of community members in the investigation and monitoring of Response Actions in their area. Community Science supports the education of interested community members - as well as the collection of monitoring data during Response Actions at Cleanup Sites overseen by DTSC. Community Confirmation Sampling is designed to ensure that site-related contamination has not migrated beyond the boundary of the Cleanup Site; to confirm that the site has been properly characterized and its boundaries adequately delineated; and/or that it has been cleaned up to applicable cleanup levels to protect human health and the environment. Community Confirmation Samples can be collected by the Technical Advisor or can be collected as split samples by the Responsible Party's consultant or DTSC staff working on the project, as directed by the community.

DTSC investigates releases related to a Cleanup Site through a "multiple lines of evidence" approach and defines the scope to address anticipated extent of impacts. TAG Community Science and Community Confirmation Sampling is an extension of the investigation and monitoring process to address community concerns beyond the site investigation scope. Community Science and/or Community Confirmation Sampling must be in alignment with the Response Action and to the contaminants and historical uses of the site. Information related to the site can be found in Envirostor. Both DTSC and US EPA, as well as other entities, curate extensive guidance libraries to guide the technical implementation of sampling and analysis programs. These guidances can be accessed via the world wide web (internet) at **www.dtsc.ca.gov** and **www.epa.gov**, respectively.

On-site TAG Community Science or Community Confirmation Sampling would require property owner/Responsible Party approval to access the property for site visits or on-site sampling. If access is not granted by the property owner, the Technical Advisor could recommend additional on-site sampling locations – of any medium and for any relevant chemical or concern – which would be reviewed by DTSC, and, if concurred with, shared with the Responsible Party. Regardless of the activity or location, well planned and documented sampling or monitoring protocols are necessary such that DTSC can verify the representative nature of the data.

Off-site Community Science or Community Confirmation Sampling requires voluntary consent (permission) from the property owners, whether private parties (private land) or governmental entities (public land). As with on-site data collection efforts, procedures must follow quality assurance protocols to ensure the outcome is representative of conditions related to the Cleanup Site. Some off-site activities could include, but are not limited to:

- Sampling of garden soils and/or residential yards that may have been impacted by the Cleanup Site
- Vapor intrusion assessment following DTSC guidance for indoor air sampling
- Surface/stormwater runoff monitoring
- Monitoring to confirm that any controls established for the project are adequately functioning (i.e. ensuring contaminated soil stockpiles are adequately covered, maintaining fences, etc.)
- Perimeter air monitoring – dust, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and/or odors
- Monitoring of potentially contaminated soil moved off-site from truck traffic from the site or "Track out" monitoring

When conducting Community Science or Community Confirmation Sampling, procedures must follow documented quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) protocols (sampling plan and quality assurance project plan) to ensure that data quality is usable for its intended purpose. The purpose of a TAG Community Science or Community Confirmation Sampling program must be defined. Depending on the purpose of the sampling, the required data quality objectives can also then be defined. Data needs to support various purposes, including community education on sampling activities, assessment of environmental decisions, and support for regulatory action. Not all data needs to meet the highest levels of accuracy, precision and repeatability, but all samples do need to be representative of the purpose. The Technical Advisor is responsible for documenting the purpose of the sampling program and following/documenting appropriate sample collection protocols and procedures for the matrix and contaminants being sampled in support of the purpose. Community Science and Community Confirmation Sampling programs, if intended to support regulatory decision-making, will be reviewed by DTSC for compliance with established protocols and quality assurance requirements. US EPA produces a variety of Quality Program Directive documents which describe procedures and standards as well as provide guidance for the preparation of QA/QC programs. These materials can be found via the world wide web at **www.epa.gov/quality**. Additionally, US EPA has developed specific support documentation for Participatory Science (formerly known as Citizen Science) which can be found at **https://www.epa.gov/participatory-science** including the Citizen Science Quality Assurance & Documentation Handbook and Templates documents.

APPENDIX C: DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITES FOR EACH TASK

Description of activities that can be performed under each task:

Task Category	Activity	Description of activity *(for informational purposes)*
Technical Advisor	Document review	Review technical documents related to site investigation and/or cleanup to communicate with the community. Review environmental statutes, policies, and guidance, in support of technical review. Assist community members with preparing comments or questions related to site documents and the cleanup process.
	Public meetings	Attend DTSC or Responsible Party led public meetings and provide summaries of such meetings so that members that were not able to attend can learn what transpired in the meeting. Assist the community in public meetings. Present information and/or answer questions at community group-led meetings regarding the site.
	Community engagement assistance	Assist with drafting language for outreach materials.
	Data evaluation and interpretation	Evaluate sampling data collected by the Responsible Party's consultant and/or for Community Confirmation Sampling (e.g., interpret sampling data, air monitoring data, excavation confirmation data, field reports, etc.) and provide updates and summaries to the community. Interpret and explain chemical exposures and/or risks associated with contaminants.

Technical Advisor *(continued)*	Communicate complex information	Convey scientific approaches and principles used as part of site investigations and cleanups. Translate complex technical and scientific information. Can include language translation. Communicate the regulatory process related to site investigation and/or cleanup.
	Community Science and Community Confirmation Sampling	Develop and lead Community Science opportunities such as perimeter site tours and laboratory tours (if approved). Lead Community Confirmation Sampling activities that may include recommending additional samples to be collected by the Responsible Party/property owner, observing the collection and receiving split samples under strict chain of custody protocols, and/or collecting their own on- or off-site samples. These samples will then be analyzed by a certified independent laboratory of the grantee's choosing, to independently confirm any sampling activities overseen by DTSC. Assist with set-up, monitoring and analysis of Community Confirmation Sampling projects (e.g., set-up of off-site dust monitors, observations of dust monitor results, analysis of dust monitoring results). Develop Community Science learning opportunities to help understand and engage with site activities (e.g., demonstration of sampling procedures/ equipment). Equipment rental to assist with Community Science and/or Community Confirmation Sampling (e.g., dust monitors, XRF, PID). Additional information regarding Community Confirmation Sampling can be found in Appendix B.

Laboratory Costs	Laboratory analysis	Costs incurred for analysis of samples collected under the guidance of the TA.
	Shipping costs	Cost to ship samples that may not be included with the laboratory costs.
Activities conducted by the grantee (not to exceed 20% of grant total)	Grant planning	Meetings or communications with the community to coordinate activities to be performed by the TA.
	Procurement	Time spent performing contracting and procurement activities.
	Reporting	Completion of quarterly reports that indicate what has been done under each task, how much budget has been spent, and how much of the Advance Payment has been utilized (if applicable). Completion of grant close-out report.
	Grant administration	Includes the time spent managing the grant budget and related documentation (invoices, receipts, etc.) Procurement: includes time spent writing request for proposals for TA services.
	Website	Development of a website and maintaining it with current information.
Community engagement and language accessibility	Educational materials and events	Development of educational materials (fact sheets, posters, flyers, etc.) Organization of educational activities that are part of Community Science including: site tours, laboratory tour, and/or sampling process/ equipment demonstration.
	Community engagement	Engagement to encourage community participation in group meetings or other public site meetings held by DTSC or the Responsible Party/property owner. Activities can include, facilitation support, development of flyers/communication material, capacity building trainings, teaching events.
	Printing and postage	Costs for printing and/or postage

Community engagement and language accessibility *(continued)*	Facilitation	Facilitate community meetings. Contract to procure a facilitator.
	Language accessibility	Contract to procure interpreters or translation of educational and outreach materials.
	Meeting space	Meeting space and amenities to hold a public/ community meeting.
Other	Other activity not listed above	Must enter description. If the applicant is using Fiscal Sponsorship and a fee will be incurred for the sponsorship, include it under "other".

APPENDIX D: DEFINITIONS

Advance Payment — Refers to a payment in advance of the expense being incurred; such a request must include estimates of costs.

Cleanup Site — Sites with evidence of a hazardous substance release or releases that could pose a significant threat to public health and/or the environment. DTSC issues Orders to Responsible Parties to compel the cleanup of these sites. Where no Responsible Parties can be found or where they do not take proper and timely action, DTSC may use State funds to undertake the cleanup. If necessary, emergency actions may be taken.

Community Science — Scientific work undertaken by members of the general public in collaboration with, or under the direction of, professional scientists. Community Science provides community members an educational component as well as the opportunity to ask their own questions, participate in the collection of Community Confirmation Sampling, and advocate for themselves.

Community Confirmation Sampling — The collection of an environmental sample prompted by the community. It is designed to ensure that Site-related contamination has not migrated beyond the Cleanup Site boundary, to confirm that the Site has been properly characterized and its boundaries adequately delineated, and/or that it has been cleaned up to applicable cleanup levels.

Fiscal Sponsorship — A relationship that allows a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (the sponsor) to bestow its tax-exempt status and certain administrative benefits onto a non-tax-exempt group or entity (the sponsored partner) by way of a contractual relationship. The 501(c)(3) non-profit organization must have been awarded its tax-exempt status and have a legally binding agreement with the grantee community group. With that agreement, the 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, acting as the sponsor, can receive gifts and grants for that project and provide donors with evidence of their tax-deductible contribution. A directory of fiscal sponsors can be found at **FiscalSponsorDirectory.org**.

Grant Manager — An individual that manages the grant, acts as the main contact for the grant, is responsible for ensuring that schedules are met, corresponds with DTSC, manages the budget and expenses, coordinates with fiscal sponsor to submit invoices and other fiscal responsibilities (if applicable), writes reports, and oversees the community group.

Response Action — For this grant, Response Actions are activities undertaken at sites under the oversight of DTSC's Site Mitigation and Restoration Program.

Responsible Party — A Responsible Party can include the following as it relates to contamination on a property:

- **Current Owners / Operator.** Although this excludes property acquired through foreclosure or a security interest, this does include current owners even if they made no contribution to the hazardous release.
- **Past Owner / Operator** at time the pollution occurred. Prior owners / operators are liable as well for any release of toxic substance that occurred during their possession/control of the land. Even a party who does not/did not own a facility may be liable as an "operator" if they had substantial control over the activities that led to the release of hazardous substances.
- **Arrangers.** This is a person/entity who arranged for disposal of a hazardous substance at a site.
- **Transporters.** This is a person/entity who transported a hazardous substance to the site. Additionally, even if the transporter moves the substance from one contaminated area of a parcel to another, uncontaminated area, the transporter may still be held liable.

Split sample — a sample collected at the same time and in the same location as another sample(s) but sent to a separate laboratory for analysis.

TAG Eligible Project Area — An area that is within a 5-mile radius of an active DTSC Cleanup Site and has a CalEnviroScreen score of >75 or a CalEnviroScreen poverty rate of >50.

Technical Advisor — A person that meets the qualifications listed in Appendix A who will provide the grantee with an unbiased, independent review of Cleanup Site-related information. Technical Advisors should be qualified in areas related to the type of contamination and specific issues relevant to the Cleanup Site.

APPENDIX E: FLUXX TIPS

Use the following tips to effectively navigate Fluxx. A more comprehensive Fluxx User Guide is available **here**.

- Chrome is the preferred browser.
- To enter edit-mode on a draft application or respond to a revision request, select **Edit** at the top right.
- Fluxx does not automatically save. **Be sure to Save often.**
- **BOLD** text indicates a required field.
- If Fluxx is unresponsive, click **Save** to refresh the page without losing your progress. **If you refresh the browser and have not saved, you will lose your progress.**
- **Changes cannot be made after an application is submitted.**
- **If experiencing Fluxx issues, send an email to ApplicationPortal@dtsc.ca.gov. Include the request ID, a description of the issue, and screenshots, if applicable.**
- Once in edit-mode, use the **Table of Contents** to quickly advance to a particular section.
- Click on a section's arrow to expand or collapse that section.
- You can print a copy of your own responses. Select the **Save and Close** button at the bottom right, then select the **Print** icon at the top right.
- **Save and Close** if you would like to save your responses and resume your application at a later time.
- If you have not yet submitted your application, you may continue editing using the **Edit** button at the top right of the form.
- When you have entered and provided all the information required to process your application, click **Save and Close** to exit edit-mode.
- Then click **Submit** to submit your application for review.