

# Informal Request for Statement of Interest and Qualifications to Serve as a Technical Advisor to Community Recipients of the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) Program

**Release Date:** April 9, 2024

**Submissions accepted on an ongoing basis until:** November 29, 2024, at 11:59pm PT

## Summary

The purpose of this informal request for Statement of Interest and Qualifications (SOIQ) for the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) Program is to build a vendor list of interested and available independent Technical Advisors (TAs) to support the recipients of the Technical Assistance Grants (TAG) awarded by the TAG program. The list will be made available on DTSC's TAG website, as a resource to TAG applicants who are looking to identify and hire TAs to support their proposed TAG projects.

This is an informal request for technical assistance providers to indicate their interest and qualifications in serving as TAs for TAG community grant recipients. Inclusion on the list of TAs generated as a result of this informal request does not obligate a TA to contract with a TAG recipient. Moreover, TAG grant recipients are free to contract with any qualified TA of their choosing, including TAs that have not responded to this informal request. Therefore, inclusion on the list of TAs that will be generated as a result of this informal request does not guarantee that a TA will be contacted, interviewed, or hired by any participant in the TAG program.

The list will be made available to TAG applicants solely for their convenience in identifying potentially qualified TAs that have expressed interest in the TAG program. The inclusion of a TA on the list generated as a result of this informal request does not mean that the SOIQ application has been prequalified or otherwise approved for the participation of the TAG program. TAG applicants will remain responsible for investigating TA qualifications prior to entering into a contract with any TA whose submission is provided in response to this request.

## Information About the TAG Program

The TAG program's mission is to provide grants to actively engage vulnerable and underserved communities around active cleanup sites in DTSC's EnviroStor database. DTSC works to clean up sites where there is a release or potential release of hazardous waste contamination. Active sites are currently under DTSC Cleanup Program oversight, in investigation, cleanup or operation and maintenance phases. The information on these sites is available in DTSC's EnviroStor database.

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. The TAG program will provide approximately \$2.5M in grants for nonprofit community-based organizations and tribal entities affected by an active cleanup site. The grants will be used by community groups to hire independent TAs to assist them to understand the hazards presented by the site so that they can effectively participate in providing input regarding response actions for the site. The grants may also be used by community groups to develop and facilitate community science projects consistent with TAG program goals.<sup>1</sup> Individual grants will be between \$40,000 and \$150,000. To see a list of eligible sites, click [here](#). To see the complete application guidelines outlining the grant program, visit the DTSC TAG [website](#).

## Who You Are

For purposes of the TAG program, a TA is a company or individual that meets the qualifications listed below and who will provide the TAG grantee with an unbiased, independent review of cleanup site-related information. TAs should be qualified in areas related to the type of contamination and specific issues relevant to cleanup of contaminated sites.

Key qualifications of a TA are set forth in the [TAG Program Guidelines](#) and below:

- Demonstrated knowledge of hazardous or toxic waste issues, or public health issues as those issues relate to hazardous substance/toxic waste issues;
- 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 agencies.
- If Community Confirmation Sampling is part of the TA'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 TA or subcontractor).
- 40-hr Hazardous Waste Operations (HAZWOPER) training certification if there is participation in sampling activities or site visits during active environmental work.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Request for Statement of Interest and Qualifications

This request seeks potentially qualified individuals or firms to include on a vendor list that may be consulted by TAG applicants as part of their search for an independent TA to support their proposed projects. *TAG recipients may hire any qualified TA, regardless of inclusion on the list generated through this request.* TAG recipients will design their own grant projects within the scope of the TAG Guidelines and may hire a TA to perform (*some or all*) 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.
- Communicate the regulatory process including site investigations, risk assessments, and cleanups, to the community.
- Attend public meetings related to the cleanup site and provide summaries.
- 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. 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.
- 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 any sampling activities overseen by DTSC.
- 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 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.
- Recommend to DTSC on-site soil sampling locations where additional sampling should be conducted. DTSC will decide if the recommended locations will be requested to the Responsible Party.

- Conduct or recommend off-site 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, maintaining fences, etc);
  - Perimeter air monitoring – dust, volatile organic compounds, and/or odors;
  - Monitoring of potentially contaminated soil moved off-site from truck traffic from the site or “Track out” monitoring.

Statements of Interest and Qualification (SOIQ) are being requested from individual consultants or firms interested in being included on a list that TAG applicants may consult, at their option, when searching for a TA to assist them with their projects under the DTSC TAG grant. This SOIQ shall be open from April 9, 2024, to November 29, 2024. The TAG application will be open to community groups eligible for the TAG Program on a rolling basis from December 2023 until January 2025.

## Submittal Format and Content

To be considered complete, all SOIQs must include:

1. A complete [TA Statement of Interest and Qualifications application](#) form that contains the following information:
  - a. Contact name
  - b. Email
  - c. Phone number
  - d. Geographic locations able to serve
  - e. Languages spoken
  - f. List of certifications, such as HAZWOPER,
  - g. Years of experience in a relevant skill, and
  - h. PDF upload of your CV or other supporting documentation showing your SOIQ.
2. A cover letter. The cover letter that accompanies your SOIQ must provide a narrative that describes the experience you have that makes you a good fit for these types of projects. The cover letter should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded to the form application.

Your submission will be made available to TAG applicants or grantees on DTSC’s TAG website. Applicants/grantees will have access to this list and may use it to identify a TA. The provision of your submission to a TAG applicant does not mean that DTSC has approved your qualifications for participation in the TAG Program. TAG applicants will remain responsible for investigating TA qualifications prior to entering into a contract with any TA whose submission is made

available through this request. DTSC reserves all rights stated in the TAG Guidelines or TAG Agreement to require additional proof of TA qualifications prior to reimbursement under the TAG Program.

### **Submission Dates and Times**

SOIQ packages will be received on an ongoing basis starting **April 9, 2024 until November 29, 2024, 11:59pm PT**. SOIQ packages should be submitted in [TA Statement of Interest and Qualifications application](#) and include the information listed in the “Submittal Format and Content” section above. Applications received by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month, will be posted by the end of the calendar month on the DTSC TAG website. Questions about the application can be emailed to [DTSC\\_TAGprogram@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:DTSC_TAGprogram@dtsc.ca.gov). DTSC will be able to answer questions about posting the SOIQ packages but will not provide advice, consultation or guidance on what information a TA should include in their packet.