



Technical Assistance for Public Participation

Facilitating public participation and understanding of environmental cleanup



Introduction to TAPP

Technical Assistance for Public Participation

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Purpose of Presentation

- The purpose of this presentation is to provide Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) members an overview of the Defense Environmental Restoration Program's (DERP) TAPP program.
- This presentation consolidates the information from existing authorities into a single, simplified reference document.
- TAPP is codified in the following regulations and policies:
 - 10 United States Code Section 2705
 - 32 Code of Federal Regulations part 203
 - DoD Manual 4715.20 "Defense Environmental Restoration Program"



Technical Assistance for Public Participation

Facilitating public participation and understanding of environmental cleanup



Public participation in environmental cleanups

Since 1994, RABs¹ have been established at more than 300 military installations to facilitate open communication and understanding between local community members and installations being cleaned up under DERP.

RABs provide a collaborative forum for community members, government agencies, tribes, and installation decision makers to discuss and identify the most efficient and productive means to restore the environment.

People from the community, who are affected by environmental cleanup activities at a specific installation, may join a RAB to exchange information with representatives of the regulatory agencies, the installation, and the community.

¹Including Technical Review Committees (TRCs), where applicable.



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Public participation in environmental cleanups

- Cleanups can be very complex and technical. RAB members may feel they need help with understanding cleanup-related activities or terminology used by scientific and technical experts.
- DoD provides RABs with a way to obtain technical assistance during cleanups.
- The program is called Technical Assistance for Public Participation, or TAPP.





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What is the TAPP Program?

- TAPP is a DoD program that provides technical assistance to RAB members and the public in order to better understand the complexities of environmental cleanups.
- The TAPP Program helps encourage public participation in the DoD's environmental restoration programs, by helping RAB members better understand the technical aspects of the cleanup.
- Eligible TAPP projects include technical assistance with interpreting technical documents into plain language, assessing technologies, explaining risk assessments and/or health assessments, or training, as requested by the RAB.
- Community members, who are members of a RAB, are eligible to apply for technical assistance under TAPP.



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Why was the TAPP Program started?



To enhance the public's ability to provide input into the cleanup process by providing technical assistance to the RAB's community members.



To facilitate a broader awareness of the cleanup process and understanding of the scientific and engineering issues underlying environmental restoration.



To strengthen the RAB's ability to be a stronger partner that is more effective in reviewing, commenting, and participating in the cleanup process, with the end goal of achieving community acceptance of the proposed remedy.





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Why would our RAB apply for TAPP?

Discuss the following questions:

- Would technical assistance help your RAB gain a better understanding of the technical issues associated with the cleanup?
- Would it help your RAB to have a technical expert read through technical documents and report back to the RAB on the content of the document in non-technical language?
- Would it help your RAB to have an expert read through the Risk Assessment and report back to the RAB with a non-technical explanation of the health risks to the community?



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Why would our RAB apply for TAPP? (cont.)

- Would it help your RAB to receive training on concepts such as how contaminants move through groundwater, how risk assessments are performed, how potential remedies are evaluated, how plume maps are created, etc.?
- Would a technical expert help your RAB provide better input to the installation so the installation understands which proposed remedies the community favors?
- Would a technical expert help the RAB understand better the technical aspects of the project in a way that would lead to community acceptance?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, your RAB may benefit from TAPP.



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What activities are eligible for TAPP funding?



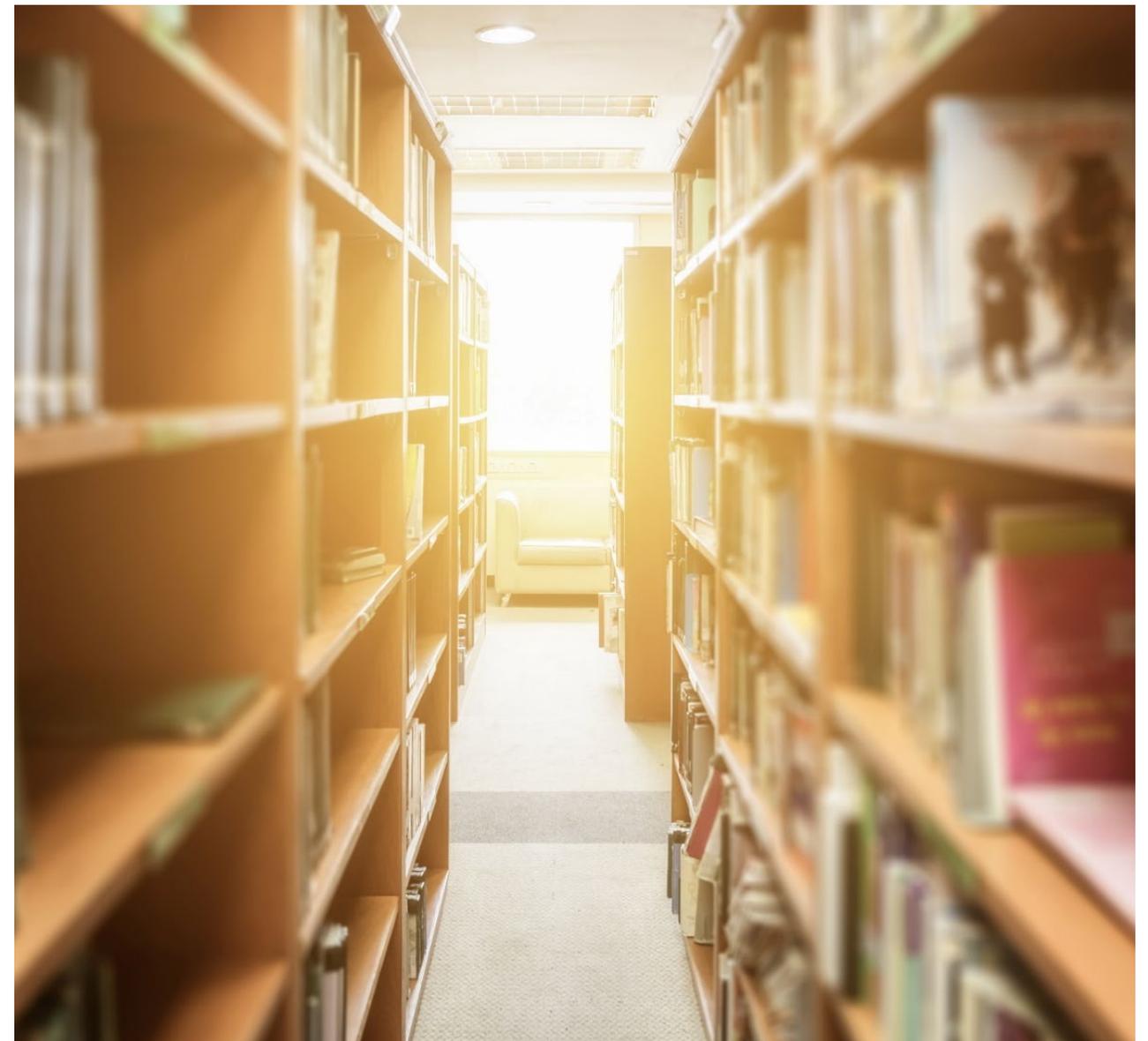
Interpretation of technical jargon in the environmental cleanup/remediation reports.



Simplified information or training by a technical expert to explain cleanup/remediation technologies and related topics.



Helping RAB members understand the overall environmental remediation process and how it relates to protecting human health.





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What activities are NOT eligible for TAPP funding?



Litigation or paying for attorney fees



Generation of new data and more sampling



Political activities or lobbying



Reopening final DoD decisions



Public outreach activities



Epidemiology or health studies



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Is there a dollar limit for TAPP funding?

- Up to \$25,000 may be awarded for TAPP assistance per fiscal year at a particular installation/location.
- Up to \$100,000 may be awarded for TAPP assistance over the life of the restoration program at a particular installation/location.
- Waivers to exceed these limits, or appeal the DoD's decision on a TAPP request, are available, if necessary.

More information on TAPP funding limits, waivers, and appeals can be found starting on page 84 of DoD Manual 4715.20, accessible through the link below:

 <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodm/471520m.pdf>



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Have alternate sources been considered before applying?

The RAB must discuss using alternate sources prior to applying for TAPP. A few common resources include:

1. Installation cleanup support contractor
2. Federal, state, and local regulatory staff
3. Local university resource staff
4. RAB members
5. National/regional resources

It is up to the RAB to examine other sources of assistance. If the RAB determines other sources are not viable, the RAB can apply for TAPP.





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Other programs available for consideration

If your RAB does not have access to technical assistance through TAPP, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has similar programs that may be available:

- Technical Assistance Grant (TAG)
- Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC)
- Technical Assistance Plan (TAP)

Follow the links below to review information on each program.



TAG: <https://www.epa.gov/superfund/technical-assistance-grant-tag-program>



TASC: <https://www.epa.gov/superfund/technical-assistance-services-communities-tasc-program>



TAP: <https://www.epa.gov/superfund/technical-assistance-plan-tap>



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What are the reporting requirements?

The technical assistant carries the majority of the reporting requirements.

- Periodic progress reports, financial status reports and materials prepared for the contract. Specified in the contract.
- At the conclusion of the contract, a final report including documentation of TAPP project activities over the entire period of support and a description of the achievements with respect to the stated TAPP project purposes and objectives.

At the completion of the contract, the RAB's community point of contact must submit a report with the following information:

- A description of the TAPP project.
- A summary of services and products received.
- A statement regarding the overall satisfaction of the RAB with the quality of service and/or products received.



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When should RABs apply for technical assistance?

- The RAB should consider when technical assistance will be needed and time its application accordingly. For example, is there a DoD action related to the investigation or cleanup for which the RAB could use assistance through TAPP?
- The Community Co-chair should work closely with the Installation Co-chair to determine the timing of these actions and the project start date, and apply for TAPP as soon as possible to ensure technical assistance will be available when needed.
- It is important to note that it may take the installation time to process the TAPP application and award the contract for technical assistance.



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How does our RAB start the TAPP application process?



Document your majority decision to request TAPP funding at your next RAB/TRC meeting. Record your vote in the meeting minutes and attach the meeting minutes to the application.



Notify the Installation Co-chair with your intent to pursue TAPP funds.



Fill out the official TAPP Application:
<https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/forms/dd/dd2749.pdf>



Reference the Practical Guide for detailed instructions on completing the application:
<https://www.acq.osd.mil/eie/eer/ecc/pfas/po/cir.html>

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (TAPP) APPLICATION		OMB No. 0704-0392 OMB approval expires Nov 30, 2025
<small>The public reporting burden for this collection of information, 0704-0392, is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to the Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Project Collection (0704-0392), Washington, DC 20503. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.</small>		
RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO INSTALLATION LISTED IN SECTION I, BLOCK 1.		
SECTION I - TAPP REQUEST SOURCE IDENTIFICATION DATA		
1. INSTALLATION Installation Name		
2. SOURCE OF TAPP REQUEST (Name of Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) or Technical Review Committee (TRC)) Installation RAB		
3. CERTIFICATION OF MAJORITY REQUEST See attached meeting minutes/vote		4. DATE OF REQUEST (YYYYMMDD) 20230731
5. RAB POINT OF CONTACT		
a. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) Smith, John A.	b. ADDRESS (Street, Apt. or Suite Number, City, State, ZIP Code) 1234 Anywhere Street Bumville, MA 45454	
c. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include Area Code) 555-555-5555		
SECTION II - TAPP PROJECT DESCRIPTION		
6. PROJECT TITLE Independent Interpretation of Technical Documents by Local Experts		
7. PROJECT TYPE (Data Interpretation, Training, etc.) Data & Technical Document Interpretation		
8. PROJECT PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION (State anticipated goals of project and relate to increased understanding/participation in restoration process at the installation. Include descriptions, locations, and timetables of products or services requested.) Purpose: To educate RAB members about the Installation Name-related PFAS contamination, in preparation for the RI work plan review. Description: Review the Final Expanded Site Inspection Report for PFAS (document, 2020), MA DEP NOES, and Private Well Sampling Results (2017-Present), Final Phase I Regional Site Inspection Report for Perfluorinated Compounds (Company, 2018), and Final Perfluorinated Compounds Preliminary Assessment Site Visit Report (Company, 2006). Provide RAB members a report and presentation with Q&A of independent interpretation and summary of the conclusions including, but not limited to, extracting and explaining what has been found out about the plume(s), characteristics, size/fate/transport/migration/profile/etc. Provide the RAB with progress reports at regular RAB meetings, and a final report and presentation by September 30, 2024.		
9. STATEMENT OF ELIGIBILITY (Refer to eligibility criteria in 32 CFR Section 203.10 and 203.11 of TAPP rule. Note other sources that were considered for this support and state reasons why these sources are inadequate.) This project is listed as eligible under 32 CFR Section 203.10(b)(1) "Interpret Technical Documents [...] Technical assistance may be provided to review plans and interpret technical reports for community members of RABs and TRCs. These reports include, but are not limited to: (i) installation restoration program site studies, engineering documents, such as site inspections..." Residents and these and other experts have already been donating their time and talents toward educating the community about this contamination. The complexity and volume of work is overwhelming for the spare time that can be donated; therefore, their time needs to be compensated in an official capacity to achieve the goal of RAB education and readiness so the RAB members can be full participants in the cleanup process.		
10. ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OR CRITERIA TO BE CONSIDERED (Additional qualifications (beyond those specified in Section 203.12) a provider should demonstrate to perform the project to the satisfaction of the RAB/TRC. Attach separate statement, if necessary.) The attached documents list the ways in which the experts are impeccably qualified under 32 CFR Section 203.12. Further, these experts have been providing this assistance to the community on a volunteer basis; it is not justifiable for them to continue providing this service without being compensated. They have earned the respect of the community, have clear command of the material and field of study, and no other provider could get up to speed on this particular site as quickly.		

Example of a completed TAPP Application



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Key steps in the TAPP application process





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Where can more information on TAPP be found?



TAPP information located on our website at:
<https://www.acq.osd.mil/eie/eer/ecc/pfas/po/cir.html>

There you can find a link to download the TAPP application, and instructions on how to fill out the form in both a step-by-step format or a more visual presentation.



Effective communication with the public regarding DoD's cleanup activities is most impactful and comprehensive at the local level. Military installation representatives collaborate with the local communities to identify concerns and communication needs, and to develop a communication strategy that addresses concerns and public interest, as outlined in the installation's Community Involvement Plan (CIP). Cleanup reports may be found or requested from an installation's Information Repository, and the Administrative Record in some cases.

[Defense Environmental Restoration Program Public Involvement: Communications, Outreach, and Transparency](#)

Community Involvement Plans

The Community Involvement Plan (CIP) outlines how an installation plans to communicate with the public during the cleanup process. The CIP documents community demographics, concerns of the affected residents and other stakeholders, and engagement strategies, including Restoration Advisory Board meetings, public meetings and Open Houses, websites and social media outreach. The CIP provides ways to not only get information out to the community, but also receive feedback from the community.

CIPs are updated periodically to reflect any demographic changes in the community or community concerns, as well as evolving outreach efforts.

For more information on the installation's communication strategies, please contact the installation's Public Affairs office or Environmental Office. The CIP is accessible to the public in the Administrative Record, which may be available online.

Restoration Advisory Board

A Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) is an advisory group made up of community members, regulators, and interest groups. RABs facilitate and improve communication, outreach, and transparency between DoD, the public, regulators, local governments, and interest groups for issues related to cleanup activities. RABs provide input and participate in the environmental cleanup process. A RAB is co-chaired by an Installation Representative and a Community Representative.

Aiming for community acceptance of final remedial actions, RABs are briefed on the project status, results of studies and investigations, and effectiveness of any implemented treatment systems. To ensure RAB members better understand the technical information presented at RAB meetings, DoD offers Technical Assistance for Public Participation (TAPP). RABs interested in applying for technical assistance can find resources and application guidelines in the TAPP section below or by reaching out to the local installation's Environmental Office.

Technical Assistance for Public Participation

The Technical Assistance for Public Participation (TAPP) program provides Restoration Advisory Boards (RABs) with independent technical assistance to improve their understanding of the scientific and engineering issues underlying cleanup. RABs are focused and interactive forums to exchange information about an installation's cleanup activities. RAB members represent the community and provide a community perspective and input to the installation decision makers. RAB members are often asked to comment on technical cleanup issues, but because of the technical nature of cleanup issues, RAB members may not have sufficient cleanup knowledge or experience to provide a helpful response to the installation. Assistance provided through TAPP can help RAB members better understand technical issues and options for remediation, and more effectively articulate their concerns to the decision-making process.

The Office of Environmental Restoration and Compliance (EM&R) has provided the following tools for RAB members to assist them in applying for technical assistance through TAPP:

- Introduction to TAPP. This PowerPoint presentation describes how TAPP can help RABs by providing technical assistance for its members. The presentation covers how TAPP works, how it can help, and how RABs apply for assistance through the program.
- TAPP Application (DD Form 2749). This form can be completed using Adobe Reader. (Don't have Adobe Reader? [Click here to download](#))
- Step-by-step instructions for completing the TAPP application. This document describes how to fill out each section of the application.
- Applying for TAPP. This PowerPoint presentation is a visual set of instructions for filling out each section of the application. It is similar to the step-by-step instructions above.



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Changes are coming to TAPP

- DERP has evolved and so have the technical assistance needs for RABs.
- The FY2024 NDAA includes a provision that modifies the TAPP process.
- Updating takes time and could take several months, and perhaps a year or more, to implement.
 - Regulation must be updated to codify the changes;
 - Revision beginning in Spring 2024;
 - Must go through a public comment period.
- RABs will be notified of the public comment period.
- TAPP will continue as-is until the new regulation is finalized.



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Get started today



<https://www.acq.osd.mil/eie/eer/ecc/pfas/po/cir.html>