



THE MEMPHIS DEPOT TENNESSEE

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Defense Department Unveils TAPP Program Communities May Obtain Technical Assistance Funding

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A new Department of Defense (DoD) program soon will allow community members to apply for up to \$25,000 per year in technical support to understand scientific and engineering issues pertinent to an installation's environmental restoration activities.

The Technical Assistance for Public Participation (TAPP) program will enable community members of Restoration Advisory Boards (RABs) and Technical Review Committees (TRCs) to seek to obtain objective, independent scientific and engineering support from the private sector. RABs and TRCs provide advice to installation commanders on environmental restoration matters and consist of representatives from the installation, regulatory agencies and local community.

RABs, as the name implies, typically discuss and exchange information on environmental restoration activities at their military installation. Such as proposed cleanup remedies, relative risk evaluations and site priorities. The Army has 61 RABs and 15 TRCs at its active and realigning or closing installations.

WHO QUALIFIES FOR TAPP?

To qualify for TAPP, a minimum of three community members must sit on the RAB, TRC, and a majority of the community members must agree on a project that would

most enhance their ability to participate effectively in the restoration program.

HOW DOES TAPP WORK?

Community members define an appropriate project and submit the application through the installation co-chair to the installation commander for approval. The installation commander with authority over the environmental cleanup at his or her installation approves or denies the request.

If the request is approved, the installation RAB or TRC chairperson and the installation contracting office work together to provide the community with the desired TAPP project. If the request is denied, the installation commander provides an explanation to the community members justifying the decision, perhaps with an alternative to the proposed project.

DoD developed an appeals process that allows community members to appeal through the chain-of-command when a commander denies a TAPP project.

WHO PAYS FOR TAPP?

Funding for the program will come from the Environmental Restoration, Army and base closure accounts and must be identified in the obligation plan (active installations) or Base Realignment and Closure Cleanup Plan. The community may obtain up to \$25,000 per year or 1 percent of the total cost of completing environmental restoration at the installation, whichever is less. There is a lifetime limit of \$100,000

per installation. Government purchase orders will be issued to small businesses to provide the technical support for specific projects.

Typical TAPP projects may include:

- review of restoration documents;
- review of proposed remedial technologies;
- interpreting the health and environmental effects of pollutants;
- participation in relative-risk evaluations;
- certain types of technical training.

Some projects do not qualify for funding under the TAPP program, such as generating new primary data, political activity or lobbying, litigating or underwriting legal actions, epidemiological or health studies, reopening final DoD decisions, or community outreach efforts.

IMPLEMENTING TAPP

Congress recognized the importance of citizen participation in environmental restoration and authorized the provision for technical assistance to aid public participation through Section 326 of the 1995 National Defense Authorization Act and Section 324 of the 1996 National Defense Authorization Act. DoD subsequently published a proposed rule, Technical Assistance for Public Participation in



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Through TAPP, community members can seek help to understand the technical details of environmental restoration activities.

Defense Environmental Restoration Activities, on Dec. 27, 1996.

The TAPP program will go into effect upon publication of the final rule in fiscal 1998. U.S. Army Environmental Center restoration oversight managers will visit each Army installation that has a RAB or TRC to inform Army commanders and staff about TAPP goals, guidelines and processes. Once the final TAPP rule is published, these oversight managers will be available to assist the installation in training the RAB or TRC community members on the rule.

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