

Community Advisory Group (CAG)

Information Sheet

What is a CAG?

A CAG is a group of diverse community members that voice community needs and concerns related to the Superfund decision-making process. CAGs serve as a means to foster interaction among interested members of an affected community, to exchange facts and information, and to provide, if possible, consensus recommendations to EPA.

CAGs are informal advisory groups. They are a vehicle to enhance communication between community members, potentially responsible parties, EPA, and other agencies. CAGs typically consist of members from each organization, interest group or view point at a site.

Why are They Helpful?

CAGs can enhance public participation in the cleanup process by providing a forum where representatives of diverse community interests can discuss their concerns and learn from each other. CAGs can also help the community “speak with one voice” on contentious issues, which can assist EPA’s efforts to listen to and respond to community concerns and make better decisions on how to clean up a site.

Learn more about CAGs at:

<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/community-advisory-groups>

Steps to Form a CAG

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) can assist with forming CAGs at communities where Superfund sites are active. Typically the following steps would occur:



Establish Membership

A community member or group would work with EPA to establish a process for recruiting CAG members. EPA could provide facilitation assistance or translation services.



Agree on Operating Procedures (Ground Rules) and Leadership

CAG members will decide how the Group will run, how they will make recommendations, how often they will meet, and who will lead the Group. CAG members may benefit from some initial training. EPA could provide neutral facilitation assistance, third-party training, and translation services.



Organize, Manage and Run Meetings

The CAG will meet regularly to achieve their goals. Meetings will be open to the public. EPA could provide for meeting locations, neutral facilitation assistance, translation services, technical assistance, and administrative support.



Make a Difference

Participate to ensure your voice is heard.



Methods for Establishing Membership (EPA CAG Guidance Section 4.5)

A range of methods are used to determine the initial membership of the CAG and typically the CAG establishes procedures for adding or removing members over time. Below is a brief description of several methods that can be used to establish the initial CAG membership. It is often useful to have an outside third party assist with the initial CAG formation.



Screening Panels Model

EPA can organize a short-term Screening Panel to review nominations for CAG membership. This Panel should be representative of the diversity of the community and should have a leader. The local community should identify CAG members who represent the diverse interests of the community. The Panel identifies a list of recommended nominees for membership on the CAG to submit to EPA for review and comment, not approval or disapproval. The process should be transparent.

Existing Group Model

An existing group in the community might be selected as the CAG if it represents the diverse interests of the community. If the group does not appear representative of the community, EPA can suggest that the group expand membership to include community interests not represented.

Core Group Model

EPA, in consultation with MDEQ/tribal/local governments, could select a Core Group that represents the diverse interests of the community. The application process for the Core Group might include self-nomination. The members of the Core Group would then select the remaining members of the CAG in a fair and open manner.

Self-Selecting Group Model

After EPA announces the opportunity to form a CAG, the local community identifies CAG members they believe represent the diverse interests of their community.

Local Government Group Model

In a fair and open manner, the local government would select members of the community to serve on the CAG. This model might be appropriate at a site where there is a positive working relationship and good communication between the local government and the community.

Who should be a member of a CAG? (EPA CAG Guidance Section 4.2)

CAG membership typically includes members from each interested or affected stakeholder group. Members may be drawn from:

- Residents or owners of residential property near the site and those who might be affected directly by site releases.
- Those potentially affected by releases from the site, even if they do not live or own property near the site.
- Local medical professionals practicing in the community.
- Native American tribes and communities.
- Representatives of minority and low-income groups.
- Citizens, or environmental or public interest group members living in the community.
- Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) recipients, if a TAG has been awarded at the site.
- Local government, including pertinent city or county governments and governmental units that regulate land use in the vicinity of the site.
- Representatives of the local labor community.
- Facility owners and other significant Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) (those potentially responsible for the contamination).
- Local business community members.
- Other local, interested individuals.



For More Information

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