

Region 9 RTOC Follow Up to Action Item from July 2010 Meeting

Tribal Lab Support

Question No. 5 from Tribal Caucus: Assistance from EPA to help tribes locate a certified lab that is not as costly and to assist labs that are certified that are tribally owned with funding.

Tribally owned Lab

Since EPA cannot endorse any particular tribal lab, interested tribes should contact tribal programs with laboratory services to see if there is interest in providing laboratory support to other tribes, and whether the capacity exists to do so.

EPA does not have the resources to develop a list of state certified interested in providing tribal support laboratories for any of the Region 9 states, nor to develop price lists for these laboratories. A list of laboratories may be obtained by the state certifying or accreditation agency in the respective states. Tribes should make their decisions on which laboratory to choose based on their respective priorities, such as cost, geographical proximity, support services, turnaround time, quality assurance programs, etc. The QA Plan Development Tool CD ROM for Tribes, available from the Region 9 QA Office, has a section on choosing an analytical laboratory if more information is needed on this topic.

As a government agency, EPA is required to remain neutral; however, limited information should be available from certifying agencies, such as recent performance evaluation sample results or whether a laboratory is qualified to perform a particular analysis.

The following information provides potential resources to support tribal lab analysis work.

EPA Region 9 Lab

The Region 9 Laboratory received limited funding to support all of the Regional media programs. Approximately 20% of the Lab's resources can be used to support Non-Superfund programs such as Tribal, Water, Waste, Air, and RCRA.

Annual planning for the fiscal year is done in the preceding September and estimates of analytical support are predicted and projects prioritized. The Laboratory uses its limited non-Superfund resources to support the highest analytical priorities of the Region. The amount of assistance available from the lab depends on the available funding, the priority of the project to the Region, the types of analyses requested, and the quantity and complexity of samples being analyzed. The R9 Lab requires that clients have a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) or a Sampling and Analysis Plan in place prior to requesting analytical services. This ensures that the Lab's resources are used efficiently and that analyses being performed and the data being reported will be of maximum relevance to a project's objectives.

To ensure that the projects being supported are considered a priority to the program and the region, all requests must initially come from an EPA manager in a program. This helps ensure that the project is a Region 9 priority. If a tribe already has GAP funding allocated for analytical support, these monies would have to be re-allocated or returned to EPA if the R9 Lab is utilized. Tribes could potentially use such funds for contractual services (i.e. technical assistance to help them with a QAPP, Sampling and Analysis Plan, and/or Site Assessment). The Tribe's GAP Project officer should be consulted before using GPA funds for this type of work.

The R9 Lab is certified to analyze Drinking Water Compliance samples but is not certified for all analytes. A list of the R9 Lab's analytical capabilities is available upon request or can be viewed at the Lab's website:

Chemistry: <http://www.epa.gov/region9/lab/chemistry.html>

Biology: <http://www.epa.gov/region9/lab/biology.html>

For additional information please contact Rich Bauer at (510) 412-2312 or bauer.richard@epa.gov.

Tribal Air Monitoring Lab Support

The Tribal Air Monitoring Support (TAMS) Center was formed in 1999 through a cooperative agreement between U.S. EPA, Northern Arizona University (NAU), and the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) with the mission of developing tribal capacity to assess, understand, and prevent environmental impacts that adversely affect health, culture, and natural resources. Assisting tribes with their monitoring needs has always been an integral component of the TAMS Center mission. The TAMS Center also provides gravimetric laboratory service for a limited number of tribes conducting particulate sampling. Filters and gravimetric analyses are provided to the tribes by the TAMS Center. One of TAMS Center functions to establish a TAMS Gravimetric Laboratory capable of weighing Particulate Matter (PM) filters in the Las Vegas Radiation & Indoor Environment (R&IE) Laboratory. This laboratory was first established in 2002.

<http://www4.nau.edu/tams/>

Contact:

Farshid Farsi
US EPA TAMS Co-Director
R&IE Laboratory
P.O. Box 98517
Las Vegas, Nevada 89193-8517
(800)784-8263 (Voice)

(702)784-8261 (Fax)

Tribal Drinking Water Sampling Support

The RTOC Drinking Water and Waste Water Work Group identified the following programs to reduce tribal sampling and analysis costs through bulk discounts at labs and achieve greater compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act

- California Rural Water Association (CA RWA) Preferred Provider Program
Status: CA RWA created a preferred provider program for its members which offers numerous discounted services, including laboratory analytical services at an average 20% discount (see www.calruralwater.org).
Contact: Dustin Hardwick CA Rural Water Association (800) 833-0322

- Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona Monitoring Assistance Program
Status: ITCA has partnered with the Yavapai Apache Tribe to pilot a Monitoring Assistance Program.
Contact: Patrick McMullen ITCA (602) 258-4822, Kevin Ryan (415) 972-3806