

2020 EJ Small Grants Project Summaries

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has selected 12 organizations to each receive \$30,000 to help address environmental justice issues in their communities. These organizations were selected from the large pool of organizations that applied to the 2019 EJ Small Grants opportunity. The grants will enable these organizations to conduct research, provide education and training, and develop community-driven solutions to local health and environmental issues in minority, low-income, tribal, and rural communities. Specific grant projects include: restoring local habitats and improving disaster planning; conducting workshops that train residents on pest defense, horticulture, water testing, and pedestrian infrastructure to improve understanding and skills for green job opportunities; educating residents to better understand air quality issues in their community and the resulting health risks; and engaging community youth to identify environmental threats.

1)

Organization: Groundwork Lawrence

Project Title: Groundwork Southcoast's Green Team: Building Community Environmental Justice Resiliency

Project Type: Training and Public education on Food Access

Environmental Statute(s): Toxic Substances Control Act, Section 10(a)

Project Location: New Bedford, Massachusetts

Project Description:

Groundwork Southcoast's (GWSC) Green Team: Building Community Environmental Justice Resiliency will focus on three approaches: (1) Demonstration projects that result in restoring four key habitat areas, and one food access area, all of which are located in a park with significant recreational space at a large, degraded riverfront site, (2) Participation in the Emergency Resiliency and Preparedness Planning of the City through building community leadership in the Acushnet Avenue neighborhood, and (3) Engage environmental justice residents in decision-making through engagement in activities and educational opportunities connected to both the demonstration projects and resiliency planning. Green Team, GWSC's youth employment program will: lead restoration through removing trash and invasive species in four targeted treatment areas within the park, establish native vegetation, and construct an Osprey nesting platform to restore sustainable habitat for wildlife. They will work on local fresh food access by producing at least 300lbs of produce on site. Youth will learn about key habitats for birds and other native flora and fauna, as well as the history of PCB's, dumping, and the risk of flooding from extreme weather events. Finally, Green Team members will do the outreach required to engage 100 residents in deepening the education, understanding, and connection to Riverside Park in our environment, the demonstration projects, and building the neighborhood wide disaster resiliency and emergency preparedness, all in partnership with NB Resilient through the City of New Bedford's Department of Resiliency and Environmental Stewardship.

2)

Organization: Energy Coordinating Agency of Philadelphia

Project Title: Living Safely with Lead: Contractor & Community Education Demonstration Project”

Project Type: Lead Home Audits and Training

Environmental Statue(s): Clean Air Act, Section 103(b)(3), and the Safe Drinking Water Act, Section 1442(b)(3).

Project Location: Philadelphia, PA

Project Description:

“Living Safely with Lead” is designed to increase home lead containment by 25% by developing a lead home audit, a contractors’ app to measure and document findings, and a pilot project to educate 40 low income families who live in areas that have a high level of lead contamination, and conduct a lead audit of their homes. The project will increase lead safety practices by families participating in the pilot by 35% by training them to minimize risks, and training community residents, including young people, to teach participating families to live more safely with lead. The goals of the project are to increase family understanding of how to live safely with lead, maximize the effectiveness of lead containment efforts, develop a replicable demonstration project, and provide metrics to support the design of effective lead remediation efforts. ECA will develop the protocol for the lead home audit and contractor app and will do the technical training for up to 10 contractors. Latino Contractors Association will recruit the contractors for the training and manage the home audit process. Clean Water Action will train participating contractors on how to detect lead contamination and share lead safe practices with the families in the pilot, and train up to 15 community residents, including STEM high school students, to conduct follow up, lead safety visits to participating families. Project results will be shared through a variety of media.

3)

Organization: Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS)

Project Title: Building Environmental Awareness to Improve Neighborhood Health

Project Type: Community Education and Collaboration Development

Environmental Statue(s): Clean Air Act, Sec. 103(b)(3); Clean Water Act, Sec. 104(b)(3)

Project Location: Tioga and Nicetown neighborhoods in Philadelphia, PA 19140

Project Description:

PHS will develop and pilot a replicable model of community-level awareness and capacity-building focused on addressing environmental issues in the Tioga and Nicetown neighborhoods of Philadelphia, where vulnerable populations are faced with environmental justice concerns. Together with neighborhood leaders and stakeholders, PHS and partners will develop and implement a year-long program of community engagement and education opportunities that will foster discussions on

environmental justice concerns, build community capacity to address issues related to clean air and water through greening, and lay the groundwork for future endeavors, including addressing other environmental concerns. The partnership will form and convene bi-monthly (6) steering committee meetings and monthly (12) partner meetings, reach 500 residents through outreach, deliver 4 educational workshops to at least 100 participants, inspire 50 residents to commit to next steps towards greening/cleaning their community and produce a report and action plan for future work.

4)

Organization: Metro Community Ministries

Project Title: Healthy Communities, Healthy Minds

Project Type: Clean Water in Schools, Churches, and Youth groups

Environmental Statute(s): Clean Water Act, Section 104(b)(3),

Project Location: Riverdale, GA; College Park, GA

Project Description:

Healthy Communities, Healthy Minds will conduct public education through youth presentations targeting community organizations, schools and other community groups. Youth and young adults will be recruited from among residents in target communities and participate in a 10-hour training on the Clean Water Act, which will include environmental health practices, learning information related to the cause, effect, extent, prevention, reduction and elimination of water pollution. Metro and its partners will collaboratively identify 15 youth to serve as peer educators, Youth Advocates. Youth Advocates will participate in 10 hours of training prior to initiating public education seminars. Training will include resource mapping techniques, researching schools and community organizations, public and national parks, and business groups that may benefit from increased clean water act knowledge and information. Following the initial 10 hour-training, youth will participate in continuous monthly education seminars, combining educational information with fun activities. A minimum of 12 presentations and educational workshops will be delivered. Acquired knowledge will be gauged, as will quality of presentation content and delivery methodology, through a post workshop assessment. Youth Advocates will distribute water testing kits with their presentations, available free of charge, and will be certified as HAZWOPER Technicians at the end of the contract period.

5)

Organization: Sustain Charlotte

Project Title: Community-based Education on Smart Growth for a Healthier Charlotte

Project Type: Bike and Pedestrian Smart Growth Education

Environmental Statute(s): Clean Air Act, Section 103(b)(3)

Project Location: North End neighborhoods area of Charlotte, NC 28206

Project Description:

This community-driven project engages residents of Charlotte's North End neighborhoods to learn about the health impacts of air pollution and the impact of transportation choices on both environmental and public health. This project seeks to educate residents about the relationship between automobile usage and local air pollution so that better choices can be made about how to travel – particularly for short trips of less than 1 mile. Information about how more sustainable choices can be made will be transferred through a series of six educational workshops, a Community Transportation Fair, and a community visioning session to identify resident-chosen locations in need of improved connections for bicycle and pedestrian access so that unnecessary car travel can be avoided. Walking trails, sidewalks, or biking lanes and paths are not widely available to neighborhood residents due to the area's lack of street and trail connectivity. This project will help residents understand the importance of smart growth, street and trail connectivity, and pedestrian infrastructure for improving the health of their environment.

6)

Organization: Heartland Communities, Inc.

Project Title: Lead Hazards in Soil Education Program

Project Type: Public education related to statute 6. "education programs relating to solid waste including health and welfare effects of exposure to materials present in solid waste and methods to eliminate such effects" and 7. " public education on toxic substances" concerning lead in soil of inner city gardens and how to mitigate and avoid contamination

Environmental Statute(s): Solid Waste Disposal Act, Section 8001(a) & Toxic Substances Control Act, Section 10(a)

Project Location: Low-income neighborhoods in inner city Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Project Description:

This project seeks to educate urban farmers and gardeners about lead contamination in the soil and how it can contaminate fruits and vegetables grown in the city or become airborne when disturbing the soil or treading on an exposed dirt pathway. 66% of the FT. Wayne housing stock was built before 1978 and therefore could contain lead hazards. The project seeks to create and implement an educational curriculum that educates inner city and vulnerable populations how to use best practices to mitigate the potential hazards of lead contamination in garden soil from formerly blighted properties. Other project activities include: 1) Six educational workshops with Burmese, minority, low-income, and youth participants over. 2) Community leaders train in leading education workshops in their own communities and language. 3) Three formerly blighted properties are prepared for horticultural activity. This project will increase general awareness of lead contamination among vulnerable populations and non-English speakers in Burmese and Hispanic communities.

7)

Organization: The IPM Institute of North America

Project Title: Empowering Milwaukee Public School Community to Improve Community and Environmental Health

Project Type: Public education, training

Environmental Statute(s): Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, Section 20(a)

Project Location: Milwaukee, WI

Project Description:

Students in Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) spend an average of 30 hours/week in schools where pest and pesticide risks can have detrimental short and long-term effects on their health and safety. Integrated pest management (IPM) is a safe and effective method that uses sanitation and exclusion strategies proven to reduce pest complaints and pesticide use by up to 90%. *The Pest Defense for Healthy Schools* is a new free, online IPM training program developed with assistance from Milwaukee Public Schools that prioritizes community involvement by teaching school staff to identify and correct pest conducive conditions. Modules are available for custodians, maintenance staff, facility managers, landscape professionals, food service professionals, nurses, teachers and administrators. The nationally recognized IPM STAR certification program, also developed with input and pilot testing from MPS, provides a 37-point, on-site evaluation of school pest management practices. IPM STAR culminates in a written report detailing strengths and opportunities for the school's IPM program, and outreach to educate and inform the broader community about IPM and its benefits. In 2019, MPS and the IPM Institute will continue our collaboration by training and empowering MPS staff to reduce health and environmental risks in the school community and achieve Green and Healthy School (GHS) status. Project activities will include five district-wide, in-person *Pest Defense* workshops, 20 onboarding webinars for individual schools and creation of a monthly newsletter to build staff capacity and meet WI GHS standards.

8)

Organization: Friends of Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge

Project Title: Growing a Grassroots Environmental Justice Program at Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge with support from Community Partners

Project Type: Conducting surveys, research, and public education.

Environmental Statute(s): Clean Water Act, Section 104(b)(3), Safe Drinking Water Act, Section 1442(b)(3), Solid Waste Disposal Act, Section 8001(a), and the Toxic Substances Control Act, Section 10(a).

Project Location: Mountain View neighborhood (MVN) and the wider South Valley (SV) area, with neighborhoods along both sides of the Rio Grande located in Albuquerque and Bernalillo County, NM

Project Description:

The project will reach underserved communities in the Mountain View neighborhood, and broader South Valley area, through an on-going inclusive and environmental justice-focused approach, generating momentum for community-wide collaboration that can develop and sustain an educational and advocacy program to improve the environmental and public health of the Mountain View Neighborhood, South Valley and its residents. The primary objective is to build capacity to implement an Environmental and Economic Justice Strategic Plan for Valle de Oro NWR developed in collaboration with community partners and residents of Mountain View and the South Valley. Primary activities include hiring a program coordinator, curriculum building, and community engagement and survey. The projects primary outputs include, but are not limited to, a curriculum outline, community driven curriculum development plan and a community engagement event to survey community members about curriculum and program implementation

9)

Organization: Taos Valley Acequia Association

Project Title: *Acequia Education Initiative*

Project Type: public education, youth engagement, and collaborative group development

Environmental Statute(s): *Clean Water Act, Section 104(b)(3)*

Project Location: Taos, NM

Project Description:

In Taos County, communities depend on *acequias* (communal irrigation ditches) for irrigable and potable uses but many are currently in a state of disrepair and pollution. The Rio Fernando de Taos watershed is impaired for both water quality and ecosystem function – negatively impacting its related acequias and therefore the water quality of acequia communities. *E. coli* contamination afflicts the entire length of the river, and issues such as eutrophication, temperature impairment, and sedimentation are also present. Many of the pollution issues experienced within acequias are due to a lack of knowledge among new homeowners and developers regarding septic and material pollution, along with homeowner responsibility to maintain and support acequia systems. The project will develop and educational campaign that will work towards the prevention, reduction and elimination of acequia pollution, thereby enhancing water quality for acequia communities and for the Rio Fernando watershed as a whole. The project will also serve to engage and empower youth in acequia culture. Through this educational campaign, the Collaborative aims to stem the tide of acequia degradation and increase water quality for acequia users. Project activities include unique educational workshops for realtors/title companies, as well as for Taos youth.

10)

Organization: Environmental Health Coalition

Project Title: Engaging Residents in Air Quality in Logan

Project Type: Air monitoring and public education.

Environmental Statute(s): Clean Air Act, Section 103(b)(3)

Project Location: San Diego County, California

Project Description:

The Barrio Logan area is one of the communities most impacted by air pollution in the San Diego region. Residents are surrounded by air pollution sources including a marine terminal, large shipyards, naval station, freeways, the Coronado Bridge, and railyard, as well as smaller industries within the residential community itself. Barrio Logan's rate of asthma-related hospital visits is higher than 92.9 percent of census tracts throughout the state, with cancer also being a major health concern. The proposed project will take place in Barrio Logan and Logan Heights from October 2019 to September 2020. The goals of our project are to: 1) educate residents to better understand air quality issues in their community and the resulting health risks; 2) empower residents to participate in governmental decision-making around air quality; and 3) support community-led air protection efforts including community air monitoring. Successful completion of the project will result in a base of engaged residents that reflects their communities' voices, experiences, and priorities in regional air quality planning. Project activities include home assessments, installation of air monitors, and enrollment of approximately 20 residents in an air quality leadership training program.

11)

Organization: Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC)

Project Title: Water Boards Leadership Institute Training for the Yurok Tribe

Project Type: Training

Environmental Statute(s): Clean Water Act, Section 104(b)(3)

Project Location: Yurok Indian Reservation, Del Norte and Humboldt Counties, California

Project Description:

The Yurok Reservation is located on an approximately 48-mile stretch of the Klamath River in Del Norte and Humboldt counties in northern California. It is California's largest but poorest tribe with low income levels and limited access to basic resources. More than half of the Reservation's residents live without electricity or telephone service. The Tribe operates six water treatment systems consisting of two groundwater systems and four surface water systems that are extremely remote and cover large tracts of land. The systems serve approximately 1,200 people. The Tribe has recently formed a water board to govern the systems but lacks enough certified water system operators. The new board members need

training in their roles and responsibilities, and the Tribe has requested that RCAC provide its Water Boards Leadership Institute workshop series to give them the knowledge necessary to maintain Safe Drinking Water Act compliance and ensure a successfully functioning board. In addition to training in their roles and responsibilities, the Water Boards Leadership Institute will offer the Yurok Tribe's board the opportunity to develop and expand the skills they need to understand their local environmental and public health issues, practice short-term and long-term planning, and develop strategies for addressing issues that arise while working together to effect positive change.

12)

Organization: One Step A La Vez

Project Title: OSALV Environmental Justice Community Education Project

Project Type: Training, public education, development, monitoring

Environmental Statute(s): Toxic Substances Control Act, Section 10(a)

Project Location: Santa Clara River Valley, California

Project Description:

The Environmental Justice Community Education Project will identify and develop youth leadership to engage the community in identifying environmental threats to its health and wellbeing and taking action to reduce those threats in the Santa Clara River Valley/Heritage Valley. Much of the local population lives in substandard housing: sheds and garages and multiple families to a dwelling. The economy of this area is still largely driven by agriculture. The project's focus will be on finding and correcting those issues threatening safe drinking water, the Los Padres National Forest, the Santa Clara River and healthy soils and seeking out ways to reduce toxic substances in this rural, low-income, agricultural community. Community members will identify those environmental issues that are important to them or that they are concerned about. Project activities include: Quarterly educational presentations for will be offered in the community including expert panels and ways to positively impact these environmental issues. Eight youth leaders will be trained through youth trainings, a needs assessment on EJ issues in the community, creation of four EJ videos created and disseminated through social media to 1000 teens, and EJ-related text blasts to 1000 teens.