



PRESS RELEASE

Massachusetts public health officials award \$100,000 to address environmental and climate justice

Funding supports ongoing efforts to address health equity in communities hardest hit by COVID-19

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

2/02/2023

Department of Public Health

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BOSTON — The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) announced \$100,000 in funding to four organizations working to improve public health in [Environmental Justice communities](#) (</info-details/environmental-justice-populations-in-massachusetts>). This effort furthers DPH's commitment to promote health equity by reducing harmful levels of exposure to environmental hazards in communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

These funds are part of a US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) grant awarded to DPH's Bureau of Environmental Health to build on efforts to detect, prevent, and control environmental hazards through investing in evidence-based decision-making tools, workforce training, and community outreach. DPH will pilot collaborations with four organizations that work directly in underserved Environmental Justice communities:

- **La Colaborativa, Chelsea** – will address the environmental health impacts of poor housing conditions by expanding its “Up to Code Toolkit,” a multilingual web-based toolkit for residents to document housing code violations and hazardous living conditions.
- **Everett Community Growers, Everett** – will build on its “Heat, Health, and Housing – Organizing for Resident-led Strategies for Development Without Displacement” project, a series of community workshops focused on developing climate-resilient solutions that do not lead to gentrification and displacement.
- **Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts, Springfield** – will expand on its “Healthy Air Network Project,” a community air quality data collection collaboration, by developing educational materials for the public about risks and ways to reduce exposure.
- **Southeast Asian Coalition of Central Massachusetts, Inc., Worcester** – will increase awareness of environmental and public health issues that affect Southeast Asian and other immigrant, refugee, and asylee communities through the Environmental and Public Health Education program.

Each organization will receive \$25,000 between January and June 2023 to implement interventions aimed at reducing environmental exposures and potential health impacts. DPH will provide technical assistance and solicit grantee feedback to inform the development of analytical tools, resources, and collaborative networks to better address environmental and climate justice issues across Massachusetts.

“This award underscores our ongoing efforts to prioritize and address disparities in social determinants of health, which include environmental health,” said **Public Health Commissioner Margret Cooke**. “These four projects will provide us with valuable insight into how community-level interventions may be leveraged to build environmental health capacity across the state.”

For this pilot, DPH sought proposals from organizations providing services to a select group of municipalities that have borne the disproportionate burden of both COVID-19 and exposure to environmental health hazards.

This funding is supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a larger financial assistance award totaling \$500,000. The remaining funds will be used to support project management, online public health workforce training focused on specific environmental hazards in Massachusetts, and to develop guidance to provide a framework for identifying people or populations who are the most vulnerable in Environmental Justice communities and develop best practices to achieve equitable health outcomes.

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