

ATSDR Public Health Investment

California

CDC/ATSDR support helps California reduce exposures to hazardous substances in the environment

ATSDR funds 25 cooperative agreements to help states build their capacity to assess and respond to site-specific issues involving human exposure to hazardous substances in the environment.

Public Health in Action

Annual Stakeholder Roundtable — Since 2008, California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has coordinated stakeholder roundtables to discuss environmental health topics with community members, activists, and regulatory and health agencies at the local, state and federal level. CDPH solicits topics of interest and invites presenters from universities and other organizations. The open forum promotes understanding, collaborations, and trust among the participants and helps guide the Cooperative Program's work with communities and agencies. The 9th Roundtable took place in February 2017 with 32 participants.

Key projects

- **The City of South Gate, Los Angeles County** — This 95% Hispanic community has three Superfund sites and other environmental health concerns. CDPH is conducting two public health assessments and has implemented CDC's Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health (PACE EH) to identify and address the community's environmental health concerns. ATSDR provides support to states to educate communities, partners, and policy makers about environmental health risks and protective measures.
- **Inactive mine sites** — For five former mine sites on the National Priorities List (NPL) contaminated with heavy metals, CDPH is evaluating exposures, educating the public, and collaborating with local native tribes and Southeast Asian communities who depend on the natural resources of these areas. ATSDR works with states on NPL sites to support their evaluations and recommended actions to protect the public's health.

Environmental Health Literacy — CDPH develops culturally and linguistically appropriate education tools for the communities. Examples include workshops in English and Spanish on climate change and public health, an educational module on indoor air quality for K-8th grades, and a digital story on mercury contaminated fish in Hmong, Laotian, Khmer.

State Priorities

- **Health Equity** — One of CDPH's strategic priorities is to achieve Health Equity through public health policies and programs. This priority aligns with ATSDR's goal to educate communities, partners, and policy makers about environmental health risks and protective measures. Examples of actions CDPH is taking to promote health equity include the following:
 - Using the CalEnviroScreen tool, a combined demographic and environmental index (that includes Superfund sites) to identify communities that are disproportionately burdened by many sources of pollution and to allocate resources to them.
 - Working in two communities in Los Angeles County with high Environmental Justice scores and a total of five Superfund sites.
 - Investigating and implementing new approaches such as PACE EH to address the needs of these communities.

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Award amount:

\$856,060 per year

Term: 3 years

Grantee since: 1989

About ATSDR

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), based in Atlanta, Georgia along with 10 regional offices, is a federal public health agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. ATSDR serves the public by using the best science, taking responsive public health actions, and providing trusted health information to prevent harmful exposures and diseases related to toxic substances.

Mike Flad, City Manager, City of South Gate, Los Angeles County:

"It shouldn't surprise us that good things happen when we take time to ask people what is important to them, listen to their responses and then take action based on their input. When agencies like CDPH, USEPA, LA County and the City work together with the community, the result is transformative. I have been a local public official for over 20 years and I could not have imagined a better outcome from the PACE EH process that CDPH facilitated in South Gate."



Did You Know?

- California has 123 Superfund sites and 979 contaminated sites either proposed, listed, or under review for the NPL (CERCLA).
- In 2014, CDPH published a Health Alert for Mercury in skin lightening creams.
- CDPH conducted a rapid needs assessment using the Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER) methodology to determine the environmental health concerns in the City of South Gate, Los Angeles County
- CDPH helped USEPA plan a Symposium on Children's Environmental Health in the US-Mexico border region and two environmental health workshops for promotores (community health workers) in the border region.

Learn more

Follow these links to learn more about programs protecting public health in California:

ATSDR — <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/>

Division of Community Health Investigations (DCHI) — <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/hac/index.html>

California Department of Public Health — www.cdph.ca.gov

PACE EH — https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/ceha/pace_eh.htm

CDC Blog Post on South Gate's Community Environmental Health Action Team — <https://blogs.cdc.gov/yourhealthyourenvironment/2016/02/11/community-environmental-health-activism-in-south-gate-los-angeles-county-ca/>

Website about Community Health Studies (English and Spanish) — www.CommunityHealthStudies.org

Digital story in Hmong — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPulfJwjOwo>

CalEnviroScreen — <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen>

CDPH Health Alert on mercury — <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/>

ATSDR – The most trusted Agency protecting American communities from environmental health threats through application of state of the art science.

Last updated 10/01/2017