

CALIFORNIA TRACKING

The Newsletter of the California
Environmental Health Tracking Program

No. 12 - winter - 2005
www.catracking.com



CALIFORNIA
ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH TRACKING
PROGRAM

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Thanks to our partners and collaborators, 2005 was a very productive and exciting year for CEHTP.

We have taken significant steps towards a strategic plan for environmental health tracking in California. We have created key elements of an IT/GIS infrastructure and forged strong relationships with a wide range of stakeholders – both of which will be critical to implementing a statewide environmental health tracking system.

We have also continued our efforts to increase both internal and external capacities in working with, disseminating, and utilizing environmental health data.

In this issue, we focus on several, exciting partner initiatives aimed at developing organizational and community capacity and preparing stakeholders to take full advantage of an environmental health tracking system when it is established.

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Mini-Grant Awards :: *Building Environmental Health Capacity*

The California Environmental Health Tracking Program (CEHTP) recently solicited mini-grant applications for building organizational and/or community capacity around environmental health data, indicators, and information.

We sought applications from city and county governmental agencies, tribes, and community-based non-profit organizations for projects that would increase or demonstrate organizational and/or community capacity to access, understand, analyze, and/or utilize (for public health action) environmental health data.

We are pleased to announce that six organizations have been awarded the grants – each at \$12,000. Below are the project summaries for each of the grantees. Congratulations to them all!

Collaborative on Health and the Environment (CHE) – Toxicants and Disease Database

Project Summary: The goal of this project is to enhance a web-based, centralized database to provide regularly updated information on diseases and their links to a multitude of toxicants. This information, which has recently been converted from an Excel spreadsheet format to a web-based database, will be more user-friendly and have the capacity to be updated instantly and regularly. By linking to other databases and resources, the Toxicants and Disease Database will also expand the network of high quality environmental health science for environmental public health constituencies to use in their own research, outreach, or advocacy efforts. This tool will assist a range of stakeholders in understanding and decoding the complex web of exposures and their relationship to disease.

Specific activities will include:

- Enhancing the database by providing salient links to other resources, including environmental and health data sources and other databases.
- Enhancing web interface functions, including the addition of mechanisms for the user to share the database with others and to provide feedback to CHE staff and database developers.
- Updating the database to reflect the most current research studies available.
- Implementing an outreach plan to publicize the database.

Contra Costa Health Services, Public Health Division – Bay Point Latino Environmental Action Project (LEAP)

Project Summary: The goal of LEAP is to increase the capacity of Bay Point residents to educate themselves on local toxic hazards and to mobilize their community to take action to address the most important of these hazards. The project will build on current efforts to work on local environmental justice issues by developing the knowledge and skills of low income, Latino residents to identify, understand and analyze existing environmental exposure data and to be able to share their findings with the broader Bay Point community. Results/findings from the project will help inform the Latino Neighborhood Action Team and other partners' decisions about what environmental justice issues to focus on for future initiatives.

Specific activities will include:

- Providing the Neighborhood Action Team with more advanced training to understand risk assessment principles, multiple source exposures and existing data sources.
- Working with University of San Francisco students to collect, analyze and present to the Team local indicator data information.
- Training residents to educate, inform, and engage other Bay Point stakeholders around what data exists and the limitations of the data.

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Fresno County Department of Agriculture – Increasing Organizational Capacity around Environmental Data

Project Summary: The goal of this project is to increase the capacity in the Fresno County Department of Agriculture to utilize pesticide use information already maintained by the department. By acquiring software, training, and staff, the department will be able to digitize crop sites and integrate current software applications with a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) module. This will improve mapping, data management, analysis, and reporting, ultimately resulting in better enforcement of pesticide use laws and regulations.

Specific activities will include:

- Acquiring and installing the GIS Module.
- Attending an ESRI authorized GIS workshop training at California State University Fresno.
- Developing and implementing a GIS training for department staff using skills and knowledge acquired from CSUF workshop.
- Managing the GIS database, including populating the GIS database with county pesticide use data and digitizing crop sites located in Fresno County.
- Exploring impacts of increased GIS capacity on project outcomes.

Parents for a Safer Environment – Integrated Pest Management Policy for Contra Costa County

Project Summary: The goal of this project is to develop “pesticide profiles” and perform site assessments for three Contra Costa County Departments and the Contra Costa County Mosquito & Vector Control District in order to assess and facilitate the implementation of the county’s Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policy. These profiles will be presented to agency and county officials, as well as disseminated to the public.

Specific activities will include:

- Acquiring and assembling pesticide use reports from various Contra Costa County agencies and districts.
- Producing and distributing “pesticide profiles” of the departments and district listed above.
- Providing IPM consultation to one or more of the departments and districts.
- Advocating for implementation of county IPM policy by disseminating findings via website and other outreach mechanisms, as well as collaborating with the County Public and Environmental Health Advisory Board and the Board of Supervisors.
- Documenting barriers and lessons learned for navigating county systems for accessing data, collaborating with agency officials, and conducting site assessments.

Greenaction for Health & Environmental Justice – Raising Environmental Awareness for Community Health (REACH)

Project Summary: The goal of REACH is to enhance the analysis, availability, and dissemination of environmental health data and information specific to Bayview Hunters Point and surrounding communities where residents are suffering from high rates of environmentally-related diseases. REACH strategies include organizing, mobilizing, and educating Southeast San Francisco residents and policymakers about the need to provide ongoing, timely, and neighborhood level (e.g. zip-code-specific) environmental health information – especially to residents living in pollution affected areas of San Francisco.

Specific activities will include:

- Utilizing established grassroots activist organizations to conduct outreach and help Greenaction educate and mobilize the residents of San Francisco.
- Increasing awareness among policymakers and community leaders about the need for environmental health tracking.
- Mobilizing grassroots advocacy to educate and encourage policymakers to increase resources for environmental health tracking.
- Collaborating with other concerned community organizations to produce and widely disseminate a “consensus statement” on the need for environmental health tracking in San Francisco.

Pesticide Action Network – Air and Pesticides Information Center (AirPIC), Linking Pesticide Use to Air Pollution

Project Summary: The goal of creating the AirPIC is to facilitate access to Pesticide Use Reporting (PUR) data for communities, researchers, and regulators. AirPIC will enable quick access to PUR data to determine monthly pesticide use for user-selected areas, chemical toxicity categories, and/or crops. Information on the AirPIC will provide a diverse constituency with information about pesticide air pollution. Easy access to this information will shorten development time for community advocacy campaigns, research agendas, and sampling programs, thus facilitating policy change.

Specific activities will include:

- Building the relational databases and developing the user interface.
- Acquiring and integrating data from PUR data and Prop 65 lists, as well as US EPA Cancer List, CA and US registration status, IARC lists, etc. as available.
- Exploring the integration of CEHTP-developed pesticide use web map service and portable dynamic mapping client with the AirPIC interface.
- Informing the development and evaluating the usability of the AirPIC by acquiring feedback from potential users including community members and researchers during the development process.

InfoAlamedaCounty :: Information for Change

Urban Strategies Council recently launched InfoAlamedaCounty: a new online data warehouse and mapping service.

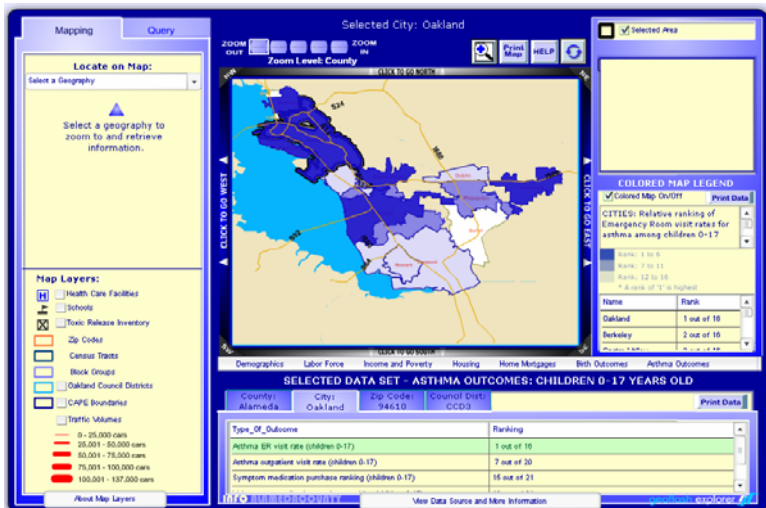
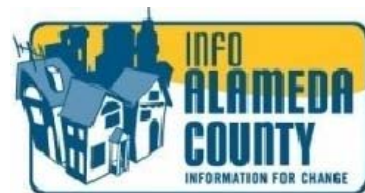
InfoAlamedaCounty and InfoOakland (Oakland-focused data warehouse and mapping service launched in 2003) strive to promote social equity and empowerment of residents and community-based organizations in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color in the Bay Area through increased access to good data, assistance in gathering and analyzing data, and collaboration in using data as a tool for promoting positive social change.

InfoAlamedaCounty is a valuable tool that utilizes Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to enable users to obtain data and create interactive maps of Alameda County. The maps can display information such as census data, toxic release sites, highway traffic volume and other information about the county. InfoAlamedaCounty also includes a helpful tutorial to get started.

InfoAlamedaCounty is the first of nine county-level data warehouses planned for construction, with the ultimate goal of creating InfoBayArea. InfoBayArea will be built through development of collaborations in each county to create information resources for community revitalization in low-income neighborhoods and for positive social change. The goal of the data warehouses is to democratize data, enabling residents and community-based organizations to access and use the information for policy and decision-making.

InfoAlamedaCounty was developed in partnership with Urban Explorer and with funding from the California Environmental Health Tracking Program and the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Making Connections Initiative.

Visit InfoAlamedaCounty at www.infoalamedacounty.org.



Announcements :: News You Can Use

Environmental and Occupational Causes of Cancer - A Review of Recent Scientific Evidence: The Collaborative on Health and the Environment (CHE) announces the release of a study initiated by CHE's Cancer Working Group to summarize scientific evidence documenting associations between environmental and occupational exposures and certain cancers in the United States. The report documents that dozens of preventable environmental and occupational exposures are linked to nearly 30 types of cancers. It is the first summary of this massive body of knowledge in one, accessible document. The complete report and related materials can be found at www.healthandenvironment.org/working_groups/cancer#1.

Funding Opportunities for Environmental Justice: Two funding opportunities are available, from EPA's Office of Environmental Justice, to eligible community-based organizations: the Environmental Justice Small Grants Program (EJSG) and the Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Program (EJ CPS). Both programs promote the use of collaborative partnerships in addressing local environmental and/or public health issues; however, they are very distinct. To learn more about the programs and to determine which program is suited for your organization, visit www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice/grants. The opening period is from January 31-March 31, 2006.

CEHTP 3-yr Comprehensive Report: We recently submitted a comprehensive, 3-yr report to our funding agency – the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It describes our program activities during the first three years of our planning grant. More importantly, it captures our program values and thoughts for future directions; both of which we have shaped in collaboration with our partners including our stakeholder advisory groups. The report's executive summary, which highlights program activities as well as key program recommendations, can be found at www.catracking.com/yr3report. Please contact us if you have any comments or questions regarding the report.

National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program: Learn about environmental public health tracking at the national level and find related resources on the program's new and improved website: www.cdc.gov/nceh/tracking.

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“Communities Coming Together to Explore Environmental Links to Breast Cancer” - A Town Hall Meeting: Marin Breast Cancer Watch (MBCW), Kaiser Permanente of Northern California, and the University of California San Francisco invite the community to participate in a Town Hall Meeting on January 21, 2006, in Oakland, to learn about the Bay Area Breast Cancer and Environment Research Center’s (BABCERC) activities exploring environmental links to breast cancer.

This public forum will provide an opportunity for community members to learn about BABCERC, which is funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) and the National Cancer Institute. Keynote speakers include: Dr. Sandra Steingraber (author of *Living Downstream* and *Having Faith*) and Dr. Kenneth Olden (Director Emeritus of NIEHS). Dr. Kenneth Olden, Janice Barlow (Executive Director of MBCW), and Dr. Robert Hiatt (Director of BABCERC) will discuss the history and work of the Center. Drs. Lawrence Kushi and Mary Helen Barcellos-Hoff will discuss the Center’s two scientific projects. Dr. Arnold Perkins, Director, Alameda County Public Health Department will discuss how to build community capacity to overcome health inequities.

Visit www.breastcancerwatch.org (click on ‘events’) or call (415) 507-1949 for details or to register for the event.

Disclaimer: Links to non-CEHTP resources are provided solely as a service. These links do not constitute an endorsement of these resources and none should be inferred. CEHTP is not responsible for the content of the individual organization web pages or documents found therein.

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The California Environmental Health Tracking Program (CEHTP) is a collaborative initiative of the California Department of Health Services, the California Environmental Protection Agency, and the University of California and is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

This publication is supported by Cooperative Agreement Numbers U50/CCU922449 and U50/CCU923293 from CDC. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC.



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