

1. monitor the health status of the community,
2. investigate and diagnose health problems and hazards,
3. inform and educate people regarding health issues,
4. mobilize partnerships to solve community problems,
5. support policies and plans to achieve health goals,
6. enforce laws and regulations to protect health and safety,
7. link people to needed personal health services,
8. ensure a skilled, competent public health workforce,
9. evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of health services, and
10. research and apply innovative solutions.

In collaboration with the CDC Working Group on Climate Change, the city of Austin's Climate Protection Program (ACPP) is piloting an approach to linking public health and local climate change programs. This project was developed by a fellow in the CDC-sponsored Environmental Public Health Leadership Institute. The incorporation of public health data into evaluation criteria for local climate mitigation strategies is central to this approach. These metrics will take the form of indicators or composite measures of environmental hazards, health outcomes, vulnerability, and policy interventions.

The ACPP-CDC collaboration will incorporate environmental health indicators into Austin's climate plan on two scales: 1) to base projections for the public health impacts of not undertaking any climate change mitigation steps, and 2) to document overall local and regional public health outcomes associated with implementation. The program will use the National Environmental Health Indicators of Climate Change developed by the State Environmental Health Indicators Collaborative, a project of the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists.

Through existing structures such as the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program, ACPP will access data and measures of environmental health status throughout local, state, and federal levels and expand to include measures of vulnerability and climate policy interventions relevant to Austin. The ACPP-CDC collaboration is an initial step in expanding a topic frequently viewed as one dimensional into a multidimensional program with implications far beyond reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

For additional information, visit the following Web sites.

- Austin Climate Protection Program—City of Austin: www.coolaustin.org.
- Cities for Climate Protection Campaign—International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives: www.iclei.org/index.php?id=800.
- Climate Change and Public Health—CDC: www.cdc.gov/ClimateChange.
- Environmental Health Training in Emergency Response (free course)—CDC: www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Resources/EHTER.htm.
- National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program—CDC: www.cdc.gov/nceh/tracking/.
- State Environmental Health Indicators Collaborative—Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists: www.cste.org/environmentalhealth.asp.
- U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Center: www.usmayors.org/climateprotection.

ACPP will use the combined data to track progress of its climate mitigation strategies, set future priorities, and identify co-benefits in health among other Austin programs.

The efforts of the ACPP-CDC collaboration demonstrate the importance of “thinking globally while acting locally.” Involving health in local climate change efforts can contribute to global efforts to reduce greenhouse emissions, while simultaneously improving the health of local residents. As more research, better surveillance, enhanced emergency response, and stronger mitigation policies are implemented, environmental health practitioners will form a vital part of a comprehensive response to climate change.

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