

**Title:** EPHT Mini-Grants for Building Environmental Public Health Capacity in Oregon

**Keyword(s):** community partners; capacity building; data tracking

**Background:** Oregon EPHT conducted a needs assessment of Local Health Departments (LHDs) around environmental public health. Results showed communities had a broad range of environmental health concerns, but environmental health offices had limited resources. Few LHDs maintained electronic databases of environmental health events or concerns.

**Objective(s):** EPHT's objective was to support the enhancement of environmental public health capacity at the local level. Such support should provide for sustainable projects that would enable LHDs or communities to build the capacity to identify, understand, monitor, and respond to environmental public health issues and events.

**Method(s):** A mini-grant program was established. Proposers were asked to focus on local concerns or needs around environmental health issues, the creation or enhancement of environmental health surveillance or monitoring databases or programs, on the provision of related training, or on building related communication or outreach programs. Proposers were encouraged to collaborate with communities and local health departments.

**Result(s):** Six LHDs applied for mini-grants and all were funded; typical amount was \$15,000. Most funded projects included the development of county-level tracking systems with ongoing electronic databases using GIS applications. Data to be tracked varied, including information about environmental events or environmental health concerns, environmental permits for burning activities, asthma diagnoses, or housing inspections for health hazards. Projects also included community outreach programs, including community forums to discuss and prioritize environmental health issues, focus groups and a website.

**Conclusion(s):** Local health departments are eager to track environmental and environmental health concerns but often lack the resources. Small seed monies can generate local environmental public health capacity.

**Evaluation:** Ultimate success will be indicated by sustainability of databases and by enhanced resources to assist the community.

## **Corresponding Author**

**Name and degrees:** Lorena Barck, Ph.D., J.D.

**Title and organization:** EPHT Program Manager, Oregon Department of Health Services

**Mailing address:** DHS-HS, EOE, 800 NE Oregon St, #827, Portland, OR 97232

**E-mail address:** [lorena.barck@state.or.us](mailto:lorena.barck@state.or.us)

**Phone and fax numbers:** (503) 872-6802; (503) 872-5398 fax

## **Other Authors**

Thomas Brundage; [thomas.w.brundage@state.or.us](mailto:thomas.w.brundage@state.or.us)

Elizabeth Everman; [elizabeth.a.everman@state.or.us](mailto:elizabeth.a.everman@state.or.us)

Michael Heumann; [michael.a.heumann@state.or.us](mailto:michael.a.heumann@state.or.us)

Megan Murphy; [mm391628@albany.edu](mailto:mm391628@albany.edu)

Catherine Thomasen; [catherine.l.thomasen@state.or.us](mailto:catherine.l.thomasen@state.or.us)