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Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$34M in Grants to Reduce Air Pollution at Schools in Low-Income, Disadvantaged, and Tribal Communities

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Contact Information

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WASHINGTON — Today, Aug. 22, as part of the Biden-Harris Administration’s Investing in America agenda, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced the five selected recipients of \$34 million in grant funding to address indoor air pollution in schools. These five selected applications will fund proposed initiatives to monitor and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and indoor air pollution at schools from kindergarten through grade 12 in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities across the country. These grants to protect children’s health are made possible through the President’s Inflation Reduction Act, the largest investment in climate action and environmental justice in history.

“Children spend so much of their day in school. It is critical for their health and academic success that schools have clean and healthy air,” **said EPA Deputy Administrator Janet McCabe**. “These grants will put schools in the best position to improve attendance and academic achievement, while addressing the unique and disproportionate health impacts that children in overburdened communities face as a result of indoor air quality challenges.”

EPA anticipates that grants to the five selected applicants will be finalized and awarded in the fall of 2024 once all legal and administrative requirements are satisfied and that selected applicants will begin their projects shortly thereafter.

The following entities have been selected for awards:

- The **University of Utah** will support the development of indoor air quality management and greenhouse gas reduction plans for schools in urban and rural areas in Utah and Nevada, as well as with the Northern Arapaho Tribe in Wyoming. This will be accomplished through energy efficiency assessments of school buildings, indoor/outdoor air pollutant monitoring, demonstration of effectiveness of air pollution reduction strategies, development of an indoor air quality school phone app, community engagement, training, educational activities, and by providing indoor air quality and greenhouse gas reduction guidance to schools.

- The **American Lung Association** will deploy the Clean Air School Challenge to raise awareness, educate, build capacity, increase implementation, and recognize the efforts of schools in low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities nationwide as they implement comprehensive indoor air quality and greenhouse gas management plans.
- The **New York State Department of Health and Health Research, Inc.** will provide capacity building in indoor air quality and greenhouse gas reduction in disadvantaged and Tribal schools throughout New York State and additional states across the country. The two organizations will draw on past experience to enable hundreds of disadvantaged and Tribal schools in New York to adopt sustainable indoor air quality management plans to make air quality improvements and greenhouse gas reductions that will improve the health and performance of New York's 1.6 million disadvantaged students plus teachers and school staff.
- The **Go Green Initiative** will partner with the National School Boards Association and their state affiliates to provide education and training for school staff, administrators, and school board officials involved in improving school indoor air quality and reducing climate pollution across all 50 states, as well as providing targeted, intensive technical assistance and capacity building in Tribal and low-income school districts in all 10 EPA regions.
- The **U.S. Green Building Council's Center for Green Schools** will build capacity among school district staff in low-income, disadvantaged and Tribal communities to establish indoor air quality management and greenhouse gas reduction plans. This work builds on long-running and successful support that the Center for Green Schools has provided to hundreds of school district staff, who collectively serve 9.3 million students. The program places direct emphasis on making capacity building and training activities more accessible to school district staff serving low-income, disadvantaged, and Tribal communities.

With today's announcement, the Biden-Harris Administration is driving climate action, improving public health, and supporting educational achievement of our children, especially those who attend school in disadvantaged communities. These projects will help schools develop and implement comprehensive indoor air quality plans through training, education, capacity building and research and demonstration projects.

The awards under the Grant Funding to Address Indoor Air Pollution at Schools will advance environmental justice and equity considerations, and align with the Biden-Harris Administration's [Justice40 Initiative](#), which sets a goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.

Background

Approximately one-sixth of the U.S. population attends or works in roughly 130,000 schools around the country and half of all K-12 students attend schools that do not have indoor air quality management plans or programs in place. Air quality in schools is of particular concern because children's developing organ systems are often more sensitive to environmental stressors, and children are frequently more heavily exposed to toxic substances in the environment than are adults. Children breathe more air in proportion to their body weight than adults.

There is substantial evidence that comprehensive management of indoor air quality in schools improves student academic performance and attendance, reduces the spread of airborne illnesses like COVID-19, lengthens the lifespan of building systems, and lowers greenhouse gas emissions from schools while providing significant cost savings through lower energy consumption.

Learn more about the [Grant Funding to Address Indoor Air Pollution at Schools](#). This page will be updated in the future with details on how schools can connect and partner with the organizations receiving funding.

Learn more about [Indoor Air Quality in Schools](#).

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