

**Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Grant Awards 2003
Selected for Award**

EPA Grant ID: EQ-831617-01-0 *Grant Application ID 2003144* **EPA Region:** 10 **State:** OR
Environmental Justice Action Group (EJAG)

Build collaborative group to address EJ issues in Northern sector of Portland to improve air quality

Issue

The community encompasses 12 North/Northeast (N/NE) neighborhoods and contains some of the most racially diverse neighborhoods in Portland. Sixty-seven percent (67%) are African American, 19% Latinos, and 11% Native Americans. Poverty and unemployment rates are high in N/NE. In 11 of 15 census tracts, the poverty rate is 35% or more (with 3 tracts over 50% and 6 tracts between 40-50%). Thirty-six percent (36%) of children under six in N/NE live in poverty. The poverty rate among Native Americans (53.5%); Latinos at (44%); African Americans (32.4%); and Whites (20.7%). Forty percent (40%) of households live on less than \$15,000 per year, and unemployment was measured at 12.4%, compared to 6.1% for Portland, as a whole. The community is home to more than 30 sites included on the Federal government's Toxic Release Inventory. Major highways and numerous highly-used thoroughfares cross the neighborhood, while both a municipal landfill and sewage treatment plant are located in North Portland.

Environmental Statutes

1. Clean Air Act, Section 103(b)(3)
2. Toxic Substances Control Act, Section 10(a)

Goal

The primary objective of this project is to address the significant and disproportionate air pollution problems faced by the residents of the N/NE neighborhoods. By working collaboratively, the recipient (EJAC) and project partners will raise awareness of the sources of pollution and hope to bring cleaner air to Portland. This process will create healthier outcomes by establishing trust between the community and agencies and support the implementation of new and innovative processes that will enhance the quality of life for all residents. The objectives will be met through: (1) the formal establishment of the Northern Neighborhoods Air Quality Coalition which will continually identify and implement projects to improve air quality and (2) the creation of a community-based education program to increase understanding of air quality issues and the health impacts for the community.

Project

The project involves addressing the problems of asthma and hazardous air pollutants in the community. The project will increase awareness in the community about the quality of the air and its impact on health based on monitoring data, release inventories, EPA exposure models, and health impact studies. Furthermore, the recipient will establish a Portland Northern Neighborhoods Air Quality Coalition that will find collaboration and sustainable solutions to reduce harmful emissions to the air.

Partnership

The project will be accomplished through a partnership between the Environmental Justice Action Group (EJAG), Oregon Solutions/National Policy Consensus Center, Northwest District Association H&EC, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Department of Transportation, and Portland State University. The reason this partnership came into being is because through various conversations, it was realized that EJAC and Northwest District Association H&EC have been working independently with the Department of Environmental Quality when the two organizations share many similar concerns. The collaborative problem-solving partnership will be created by building upon the initial relationship between EJAC and Northwest District Association H&EC.

