

Linking to US EPA

A County Extension Guide to US EPA Region 5

Both US EPA and the Cooperative Extension Service offer successful strategies and resources for working with communities. The agencies also share similar objectives: linking resources and people.

EPA's environmental goals, interests, and capabilities provide sound tools to encourage and support local environmental education efforts. Extension personnel can work with community leaders to connect the expertise and resources of EPA with community agencies and interest groups.

Activities that bring these agencies' talented, committed professionals together expand their resources and skills. This helps them devise more and different ways to benefit communities.

Because of their shared objectives and complementary resources, it is appropriate that Extension and EPA become partners. Together they can more effectively build local capacity to identify and address community environmental challenges. Efforts are underway to foster and, in some cases, formalize these relationships.

This pamphlet for Cooperative Extension staff describes opportunities for program partnerships with US EPA in Region 5.

What is the US EPA?

The US Environmental Protection Agency began operation in December 1970. It was created by consolidating all Federal environmental regulatory activities into a single agency. Its mission is protecting human health and safeguarding the environment in the United States.

The US EPA consists of headquarters program offices in Washington DC and 10 regional offices. Region 5 includes Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio.

Why Partner with US EPA?

When environmental challenges appear, a community may find itself facing a far more complex – and even threatening – problem than it has ever encountered. Just trying to understand the problem and its possible consequences can be daunting. Leaders contend with technical jargon, regulatory verbosity, and potential internal community conflict.

The EPA has resources and information that can help local leaders maintain community environmental health. It has sources of technical information and expertise. It houses a vast array of technical skills. And it leverages its resources and grants on behalf of citizens.

As a federal agency, the EPA

US EPA's Strategic Goals

Clean air
 Clean and safe water
 Safe food
 Preventing pollution and reducing risk in communities, homes, workplaces, and ecosystems
 Better waste management, restoring contaminated waste sites, and emergency response
 Reducing global and cross-border environmental risks
 Expanding Americans' right to know about their environment
 Sound science, improved understanding of environmental risk, and greater innovation to address environmental problems
 A credible deterrent to pollution with greater compliance with the law
 Effective management (of EPA)

often encounters substantial barriers in connecting to and working with communities. Since county-based Cooperative Extension faculty have strong relationships with their communities, they can help connect communities with relevant and appropriate EPA resources.

Programs in Common

One of EPA's goals is: "to ensure citizen access to environmental information and to improve environmental protection." If appropriate information is not available or accessible from a local or state agency, a community may turn directly to the EPA for technical help.

Communities might seek information about a particular pollutant or about the volume of pollution produced by industries and individual companies. They may need help with assessing contamination and with developing strategies to abate and clean up contamination.

Children's environmental health is a new EPA initiative. It addresses "preventing pollution and reducing risk in communities." EPA experts can help a community learn about environmental factors that can impact children's health, and about how to assess potential risk factors, such as lead.

Another EPA goal addresses "safe food." Its Offices of Pesticides and Water have resources on the topic.

Community development efforts can benefit from EPA experience with reclaiming brown-fields and with environmental justice programs that ensure development occurs equitably.

Many other US EPA programs are relevant to the issues that regularly affect communities. By partnering with the agency a community can leverage EPA's considerable resources, information and technical expertise in a way that is consistent with the community's situation, needs and values.

How to Connect With US EPA

When deciding who to call about an environmental concern, communities are encouraged to start with their state agencies. States have their own environmental regulations and information resources which may be most applicable to a community situation. Many state programs are also funded through a partnership agreement with the US EPA.

Communities should turn directly to the US EPA for help in these situations:

- If EPA is sponsoring a new initiative not available through state agencies.
- For specific funding opportunities directed at communities.
- If state resources are unavailable or inaccessible.
- If the problem crosses boundaries — state or international.

There are many ways to connect with the EPA depending on the issue and the kind of relationship or assistance desired.

Making a connection may be as simple as calling one of the agency's many toll-free information hotlines or visiting its extensive web pages. It may be as complex and involved as applying for grant money and/or entering into a more formal partnership on a water quality or pollution abatement issue.

If you are looking for a more involved connection than is possible through the website or a hotline, you should first identify which EPA Program, Team, or Division has jurisdiction over your issue of concern and then contact

the appropriate Region 5 office.

This pamphlet lists contact information and a description of 20 major interest areas and programs in EPA. You can also tap into EPA informational and technical resources directly by going to the EPA web sites listed below, or through staff. The last section of this guide lists contacts for software and funding, and lists more than 40 hotlines and phone numbers.

Contacts in Region 5

The Experts List on Region 5's website names specific individuals who can provide information on topics of interest to communities.

www.epa.gov/cgi-bin/r5experts.cgi

Topics in the Experts List are followed by subtopics. Each is linked to specific names and phone numbers. The following table relates community interests to EPA's topics.

Contacts in Region 5 [<www.epa.gov/cgi-bin/r5experts.cgi/>](http://www.epa.gov/cgi-bin/r5experts.cgi/)

To find an expert on a community concern, check names linked to EPA topics listed below.

Community Interest	Expert List topics US EPA Region 5
AFO/CAFO (animal feeding operations)	Land - agriculture Water - wastewater/ discharges
Agriculture	Land - agriculture, soils, legislation, pesticides, pollution prevention, storage tanks, wastes, water (subtopics listed on EPA website)
Air quality	Air - air pollutants, air quality emission, atmosphere, automobiles and other vehicles
Children's health and seniors' health	Human Health - children's health, seniors' health, health effects of substance
Community based environmental protection	Administrative Offices - geographic initiatives Clean Up Communities - community involvement, community outreach, community right-to-know, environmental justice, social science, technical assistance, toxic release inventory Ecosystems - ecological assessment, ecological restoration, people in ecosystems Information Resources
Drinking water and groundwater protection	Water - conservation, drinking water, ground water, underground injection wells, water quality
Economy and the environment	Sustainable Development - land use, sustainable development, urban sprawl Business and Industry - small businesses Clean Up - brownfields
Environmental justice	Communities, Human Health, Pesticides, Storage Tanks, Wastes, Water (subtopics listed on EPA website)
Environmental education	Environmental Education - outreach Communities - community involvement, community outreach, community right-to-know, environmental justice, social science Environmental Management - environmental indicators, state of the environment
Green communities	Sustainable Development - land use, sustainable development, urban sprawl

Community Interest	Expert List topics US EPA Region 5
Indoor air quality/radon	Air - air quality emission, indoor air pollution, radon
Land use/urban sprawl	Air, Business and Industry, Clean Up, Ecosystems, Information Resources, Sustainable Development, Water (subtopics listed on EPA website)
Lead programs	Clean Up, Contaminants, Human Health (subtopics listed on EPA website)
Pesticide use and reduction	Contaminants, Human Health Pesticides - application, child safety, spill prevention and protection, worker protection Pollution Prevention and Recycling
Pollution prevention and toxics	Air, Business and Industry, Clean Up, Communities, Contaminants, Emergencies, Great Lakes, Information Resources, Legislation, Pesticides, Pollution Prevention and Recycling, Storage Tanks, Waste, Water (subtopics listed on EPA website)
Recycling	Pollution Prevention and Recycling (see programs list on EPA website)
Small business and environment	EPA Administrative Offices - regional minority business Business and Industry - industries, small business Clean Up - asbestos, lead Pollution Prevention and Recycling (see programs list) Wastes - hazardous wastes generation, solid wastes (See also: small business hotline)
Solid and hazardous waste management	Pollution Prevention and Recycling, Wastes (subtopics listed on EPA website)
Understanding environmental regulations	Communities, Environmental Education, Legislation (subtopics listed on EPA website)
Volunteer monitoring and water quality	Communities, Environmental Education, Sustainable Development, Water
Wetlands protection	Ecosystems - ecological restoration

Web Pages

The US EPA has an extensive and comprehensive web site containing a wealth of useful information. It includes contact information for various offices, program areas, and individuals. Here is a short list of some of the more relevant web addresses:

US EPA national home page
www.epa.gov

Envirofacts (access point to selected environmental data)
www.epa.gov/enviro/

National Environmental Publications Internet Site (NEPIS)
www.epa.gov/ncepihom/nepishom/

US EPA Region 5 home page
www.epa.gov/region5/

US EPA Region 5 Experts List (contact information for over 1000 experts)
www.epa.gov/cgi-bin/r5experts.cgi

Software

US EPA, in cooperation with Purdue University, develops educational software programs. These tools help clarify complex environmental issues. Most are available on three CD-ROMs; more are planned.

- *Environmental Hypermedia Programs and Water Quality Models, 1996, 50+ programs*
- *Environmental Hypermedia Programs, Vol. II, 1998, 11 programs*
- *Environmental Hypermedia Programs, Vol. III, 1999*

The CD-ROMs cost \$15-\$25 each. Order from:

Carol M. Sikler
 Farm Building Plan Service,
 Purdue University
 1146 ABE Building, Room 208
 West Lafayette, IN 47907-1146
 e-mail: fbps@ecn.purdue.edu
 Phone: 765/494-1174

Many programs are also available free by downloading from the Net. An index is available at www.epa.gov/seahome/ For example see:

TRILOGY: Environmental Planning for Small Communities
www.epa.gov/seahome/trilogy.html
 EPA Grant Writing Tutorial
www.epa.gov/seahome/grants.html

Publications

EPA makes available its many publications, research documentation, and other work. For example, the National Service Center for Environmental Publications, a central EPA documents repository, has over 5500 titles for free distribution on paper and/or electronic format.

For those with Internet access, a good place to start is the National Environmental Publications Internet Site (NEPIS), EPA's largest electronic documents site. It has documents that are no longer available in print.

You can search, view, and print (including full images of all original pages and full text) from over 7,000 archival and current documents. The address for this site is: <http://www.epa.gov/ncepihom/nepishom/srch.htm>

A National Publications Catalog can be browsed or searched online. Order publications:

US EPA/NSCEP
 PO Box 42419
 Cincinnati, OH, 45242-2419
 Online: www.epa.gov/ncepihom/
 e-mail: ncepimal@one.net
 Phone: 800/490-9198
 Fax: 513/489-8695

Funding

How to fund projects is a major concern to many people working with communities. EPA administers numerous grants and other funding opportunities. Tapping into its funding is an excellent way to connect with EPA and also to support development of a community's quality of life. EPA funding sources in Region 5 are too numerous to list here. You can access the information online at: www.epa.gov/grtlakes/seahome/resources/

If you lack Internet access, contact the Region 5 office in Chicago, 800/621-8431, and ask for a list of funding programs.

Hotlines

For a quick answer to a question – yours or your client's – you can call one of the many (mostly) toll-free EPA information hotlines:

Acid Rain Hotline
202/564-9620

Aerometric Information Retrieval System (AIRS) -
Air Quality Subsystem (AQS) Hotline
800/334-2405

Aerometric Information Retrieval System (AIRS) -
AIRS Facility Subsystem (AFS) - Helpline
800/367-1044

Air Risk Information Center Hotline (Air RISC)
919/541-0888

Asbestos Abatement/Management Ombudsman
800/368-5888

Center for Exposure Assessment Modeling (CEAM)
Help Desk
(706/355-8400)
e-mail: ceam@epa.gov

Clean Air Technology Center (CATC) Infoline, formerly
Control Technology Center
919/541-0800 (English)
919/541-1800 (Spanish)
e-mail: catcmail@epa.gov

Clearinghouse for Inventories and Emission Factors
(CHIEF) Help Desk
(919/541-5285)
e-mail: info.chief@epa.gov

Climate Wise Wise-Line
800/459-WISE (800/459-9473)

Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know
Act (EPCRA) Hotline
800/424-9346

Energy Star Hotline
888/STAR-YES (888/782-7937)

Environmental Financing Information Network (EFIN)
202/564-4994
e-mail: efin@epamail.epa.gov

Environmental Justice Hotline
800/962-6215
e-mail: environmental-justice-epa@epamail.epa.gov

EPA Enforcement Economic Models Helpline
888/ECONSPT (888/326-6778)

EPA Grants and Fellowships Hotline (NCERQA Hotline)
800/490-9194

Federal Facilities Docket Hotline
800/548-1016

Hazardous Waste Ombudsman
800/262-7937

Indoor Air Quality Information Clearinghouse
(IAQINFO)
800/438-4318
e-mail: iaqinfo@aol.com

Inspector General Hotline
888/546-8740

Local Government Reimbursement Program Helpline
800/431-9209

Methods Information Communication Exchange
Service (MICE)
703/821-4690

Mexico Border Hotline
800/334-0741 (English/Spanish)
e-mail: border.team@epamail.epa.gov

National Antimicrobial Information Network
800/447-6349
e-mail: nain@ace.orst.edu

National Service Center for Environmental
Publications (NSCEP) formerly NCEPI
800/490-9198
e-mail: ncepi.mail@epamail.epa.gov

National Hispanic Indoor Air Quality Hotline
800/SALUD-12 (800/725-8312) (Spanish/English)

National Lead Information Center Hotline
800/424-LEAD (800/424-5323)
e-mail: leadctr@epamail.epa.gov

US EPA/COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PARTNERSHIPS—No. 3

National Pesticide Telecommunications Network
800/858-7378
e-mail: nptn@ace.orst.edu

National Radon Hotline
800/SOS-RADON (800/767-7236)
e-mail: airqual@nsc.org

National Response Center Hotline
800/424-8802

National Small Flows Clearinghouse Hotline
800/624-8301

Ozone Protection Hotline
800/296-1996
e-mail: hotline@tidalwave.net

Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) Helpline
888/EPA-PAYT (888/372-7298)

Pollution Prevention Information Clearinghouse (PPIC)
202/260-1023
e-mail: ppic@epamail.epa.gov

RCRA, Superfund and EPCRA Hotline
800/424-9346
TDD 800/553-7672

Safe Drinking Water Hotline
800/426-4791
e-mail: hotline-sdwa@epamail.epa.gov

Small Business Ombudsman Hotline
800/368-5888

Storet Water Quality System Hotline
800/424-9067
e-mail: storet@epamail.epa.gov

Toxic Release Inventory - User Support Service
202/260-1531

Toxic Release Inventory - Community Right To Know -
EPCRA Hotline
800/535-0202
e-mail: tri.us@epamail.epa.gov

Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) Hotline
202/554-1404
e-mail: tsc-hotline@epamail.epa.gov

WasteWise Helpline
800/EPA-WISE (800/372-9473)
e-mail: ww@cais.net

Wetlands Information Hotline
800/832-7828
e-mail: wetlands-hotline@epamail.epa.gov

Prepared by Christopher Thoms and Elaine Andrews, University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension-Environmental Resources Center. Sources: US EPA web site pages. Edited by Lynn Entine. Designed by Nellie Schmitz.



Environmental Resources Center, University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension, 1450 Linden Dr., 216 Agriculture Hall, Madison, WI 53706
608/262-0020 <<http://www.uwex.edu/erc>>

Produced with funding from the US EPA Office of Environmental Education



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