

EPA Announces Funding for Research to Improve Air Quality, Protect Health



Article By

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The **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** awarded five grants totaling almost \$2 million to academic institutions for research on innovative processes to further improve air quality in the U.S. and help track the effectiveness of pollution control measures. Pollutants such as ozone and fine particles are linked to a variety of serious health effects, including aggravation of asthma and other lung diseases, heart attacks, increased hospital admissions and medication use, and premature death.

The grants announced today are focused on generating better data and tools to enable regulatory authorities to more effectively ensure that the air we breathe is healthy. The information gathered through this new research will help inform policy decisions that affect air quality, including the way states and cities address short-term air quality challenges.

"These grants will encourage innovative solutions for incorporating new information, technology advances, and current scientific understanding into air quality management," says Bob Kavlock, deputy assistant administrator for EPA's Office of Research and Development. "This research will help improve our efforts to respond quickly to short-term air pollution issues such as heat waves or seasonal impacts on air quality."

The funding covers projects that will examine links between short-term air pollution drivers and existing management strategies, development of decision-making models, and air quality forecasting techniques. The five grantees include:

- University at Albany-SUNY, Albany, N.Y., will help incorporate short-term forecasts of emissions from electricity generation and traffic into modeling and air quality forecasts.
- University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas, will include the design and testing of innovative methods to link electricity generation and emissions pricing for the prevention of air pollution episodes.
- Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Ga., will develop a system for estimating and minimizing the impacts of prescribed burning on air quality, particularly in Georgia.
- Texas A&M University-Kingsville, Kingsville, Texas, will address the issues of multi-pollutant air quality management and develop integrated decision-making models for air quality policy making.
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, N.C., will develop new tools for linking air quality modeling and forecasting with forecasts of electricity demand.

These grants are part of **EPA's Science to Achieve Results (STAR) program**, which supports human health, ecology, economics, and engineering sciences through grants, centers, and fellowships. EPA provides air quality and environmental information to the public through websites including AIRNow, Window to My Environment, and Envirofacts. These tools help educate the public and increase their participation in decisions that affect air quality.

More information on the grantees: <http://www.epa.gov/ncer/dynair>

More information on the EPA's STAR program: <http://www.epa.gov/ncer>

More information on AIRNow: <http://www.airnow.gov>

More information on Window to My Environment: <http://www.epa.gov/enviro/wme/>

More information on Envirofacts: <http://www.epa.gov/enviro/>

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