

Opportunities for Action



Governmental environmental health services are not a luxury; they are essential to assure safe drinking water, clean air, climate change adaptation, and other basic needs. The following opportunities for action support the belief that everyone should have the opportunity to achieve optimal health during all stages of life, including physical, mental, and social well-being that extends beyond the absence of disease. As such, the following action steps support the uncomplicated right to environmental health:

1. **PREVENTION:**

Enable federal, state, local, and tribal governments to promote resilient, equitable, and healthy communities for all, especially those who are most vulnerable and most at risk.

- Decrease and eliminate exposures to toxicants and hazardous waste, placing high priority on communities that are most impacted and vulnerable to adverse environmental health exposures.
- Guarantee that all communities breathe clean, healthy outdoor air.
- Ensure safe and accessible water for drinking and recreation.
- Provide access to healthy, affordable, and safe foods.
- Ensure healthy indoor environments.
- Invest in green and sustainable building initiatives.
- Strive to achieve sustainable and resilient community planning.
- Provide safe and health-promoting transportation alternatives.
- Ensure access to safe spaces for recreation and physical activity.

2. **RESPONSE:**

Build and support the governmental environmental health system, including meeting workforce needs and tracking disease outcomes and environmental exposures.

- Invest in environmental health surveillance, including disease tracking, biomonitoring, early warning systems, and modeling. Expand the existing outdoor air quality monitoring system.
- Provide resources and training to ensure a robust and qualified environmental health workforce, particularly at the state and local levels.

- Create incentives, such as increased pay, benefits, professional development, and training to recruit and retain environmental health workers.

3. **REAL-LIFE SOLUTIONS:**

Strengthen environmental health protections and support peer-reviewed research to inform environmental health decisionmaking and practice.

- Strengthen and enforce existing standards and regulations to protect air, soil, and water from human health hazards.
- Enforce existing and implement newly established food safety and quality regulations.
- Support research on issues like chemical exposure to guide the regulation of indoor environments, including homes, childcare facilities, workplaces, and schools.
- Commission more economic analyses of the environmental health system.