

NEHA Mentorship Program for Developing School IPM Capabilities

Funding Awarded: \$241,000

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) will promote smart, sensible, and sustainable pest management practices in schools by utilizing an intensive Integrated Pest Management (IPM) mentorship program between local health departments (LHDs) and underserved school districts. NEHA will also leverage their substantial national network to bring IPM to school districts nationwide.

The project will focus on sustainability and partnerships to build community capacity and create accountability for program continuance. Beyond the relationships being built between school districts and LHDs, the project will engage pest management professionals and state pesticide applicator program administrators.

EPA recommends the use of IPM in schools as the standard for pest control and promotes its adoption through outreach, research, public education, training, demonstrations, and grants. Through this project, EPA is meeting the need for technical support, public education and outreach to promote widespread adoption.

Objectives

- Implement verifiable IPM in five underserved school districts across the nation by leveraging the existing relationships between local health departments and school districts into intensive IPM mentorship.
- Encourage IPM adoption in school districts nationwide through outreach and information-sharing.

Programs and Activities

Training and Mentorship: A school district successfully implementing IPM and its local health department will be paired with an underserved school district without an IPM program and its local health department to provide mentorship, materials, and hands-on IPM training towards the implementation of verifiable school IPM. Pest management professionals and state pesticide applicator program representatives will be invited to participate in all trainings and outreach activities.

Outreach: A school IPM toolkit will be developed and distributed to all schools visited by NEHA members and other environmental health professionals in their normal inspection process. Each mentored school district will present on their IPM program at a state or regional conference, with one presenting at NEHA's Annual Education Conference. Four national webinars on school IPM implementation will be offered to all interested parties, and promoted by both NEHA's existing membership network and EPA's Center of Expertise on School IPM. In addition, NEHA's existing network, newsletter and website will be used to share information on IPM materials, training, and educational activities.

Desired Outcomes

- Increase in the number of school districts implementing verifiable IPM programs
- Increased collaboration and partnerships between school districts and local health departments
- Increase awareness of IPM by licensed pest management professionals
- Decrease in unnecessary pesticide use
- Decreased school absenteeism

Building community capacity and sustainability for school IPM through mentorships and partnerships

