

AIR ALLIANCE HOUSTON STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2024



Mission

To reduce the public health impacts from air pollution through applied research, education and advocacy.

Vision

We envision healthy communities with clean air every day, for everyone.

Belief

Everyone has a right to breathe clean air and where you live, work, learn, and play should not determine your health.

Core Values & Principles

- Knowledgeable
- Accessible
- Equitable
- Progressive
- Community-Driven
- Human

Our Approach



Equity-Centered Research

Prioritizing research that examines environmental inequities and cumulative impacts to illuminate patterns of disadvantage and the root causes of health inequities.



Diffusion of Information

Diffusion in this context is the action of spreading - both widely and quickly - data, information, ideas, and calls for residents to mobilize.



Collaborative Advocacy

Communities are stronger when they can advocate for themselves. Building an Environmental Justice Advocacy Leadership Lab will strengthen the advancement of environmental justice.

Commitment to Environmental Justice

The Greater Houston area faces unique air quality challenges. Environmentally hazardous facilities are concentrated in and near communities of color and low-income neighborhoods, and these facilities emit millions of pounds of toxic air pollution associated with a variety of health risks. The disproportionate presence of these facilities is an indicator of and a contributor to racial and economic inequities in health and other life outcomes.



Strategic Focus Areas



Building Healthy Communities

- **Clean Air for Port Communities:** Advocate with communities to increase for Port Houston to adopt clean air policies and practices and to hold accountable all of the pollution sources along the Houston Ship Channel.
- **Reduce Industrial Emissions:** Routinely notify communities about air permit applications proposed in local neighborhoods and provide public comments in response to the permit applications.
- **Legal & Regulatory Advocacy:** Routinely respond in writing, with testimony, and in our calls to action to air quality-related state and federal rules and regulations, including those related to the Clean Air Act and national air quality standards.



Supporting Sustainable and Equitable Transportation

- **Clean and Just Transportation Planning:** Advocate for an equitable multi-modal transportation system throughout Houston that reduces carbon emissions and other pollution emitted by vehicles.
- **Equitable Goods Movement:** Support and uplift directly impacted communities who are experiencing disproportionate impacts of freight traffic and trains, and advocate for alternatives.
- **Opposition to I-45 and Other Highway Expansions:** Advocate for a better I-45 expansion project based on true community engagement. Overall, inspire a shift away from highway expansions toward more thoughtful and sustainable transportation planning.



Protecting Against Chemical Disasters

- **Reduce Industrial Flaring:** Work toward strengthening federal rules and local practices to reduce the public health impacts of industrial flaring.
- **Rapid Response:** Implement an efficient communications and data infrastructure to support urgent responses to chemical incidents and other disasters.
- **Community Notifications/Toxic Alert Systems:** Advocate for the implementation of an alert system that would rapidly notify communities about threats to their health and safety during chemical disasters.



Monitoring Our Air

- **Community Air Monitoring Network:** Build and operate a community-based low-cost air monitoring network to address air quality concerns in neighborhoods with the greatest risks.
- **Community Action Plans:** Co-create action plans with residents around issues of concern based on the results of community air monitoring data.
- **Rapid Response Monitoring:** Use the Community Air Monitoring Network to rapidly notify communities about threats to their health and safety during chemical disasters.
- **Sampling the City:** Partner with communities to organize air quality monitoring bike rides to bring attention to local air quality concerns and pollution sources.





Mobilizing Action

- **Community Voice:** Build a variety of platforms and methods for directly impacted community members to set campaign priorities.
- **Environmental Justice Leadership Lab:** Cultivate a deeper understanding among residents of the social and environmental conditions that inform environmental justice through training, tools, and technical assistance.
- **Governmental Advocacy:** Advocate to policymakers at all levels to support clean air policies including during the state legislative session
- **Narrative Change:** Engage with the media to challenge dominant narratives around sources of air pollution by uplifting the voices of marginalized communities and connecting air quality to other injustices.



Advancing Climate Justice

- **Close Parish Coal:** Advocate for the closing of the W.A. Parish coal units, one of the state's worst climate polluters, as we move closer to a just transition in our energy sources.
- **Decarbonization:** Critically examine the role of technical and nature-based carbon management strategies to ensure environmental justice communities remain at the center of a decarbonized future.
- **Slow Plastic Pollution:** Raise awareness of the false solution of 'chemical recycling' and SAF in order to stop these polluting facilities from coming to Houston neighborhoods.

Measuring Our Success

Building Healthy Communities

- By 2025, unauthorized emissions in the greater Houston area will decrease by 50%.
- By 2025, the adoption of policies and practices that reduce exposure to air pollution will increase.

Supporting Sustainable And Equitable Transportation

- By 2025, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) will decrease by 3% per capita.
- By 2025, 25% of school bus fleets will be electrified.

Protecting Against Chemical Disasters

- By 2025, a toxic chemical alert system will be implemented to rapidly notify communities about threats to their health and safety during chemical disasters.

Monitoring Our Air

- By 2021, a regional plan to establish a sustainable community air monitoring network program will be developed and implemented.
- By 2025, community air monitoring networks will be implemented in all environmental justice communities.

Mobilizing Action

- By 2025, engage and mobilize communities to advocate for the implementation of equitable policies and practices to improve air quality and advance environmental justice.

Advancing Climate Justice

- By 2025, greenhouse gas emissions will decrease.

