

## ATSDR Public Health Assessment Process and Other Site Activities

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Region 4

Central Branch

Office of Community Health Hazard Assessment

# Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

- **Non-regulatory federal public health agency**
- **Created by the Superfund Law in 1980 (CERCLA)**
- **CERCLA Congressionally mandated ATSDR to:**
  - Perform public health assessments at hazardous waste sites
  - Develop toxicological profiles on harmful substances
  - Conduct epidemiological investigations
  - Maintain health registries and conduct medical surveillance

CERCLA = Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act

# ATSDR Mission and Impact

## MISSION

- ATSDR protects communities from harmful health effects related to exposure to natural and man-made hazardous substances.
- We do this by responding to environmental health emergencies, investigating emerging environmental health threats, conducting research on the health impacts of hazardous waste sites, and building capabilities of and providing actionable guidance to state and local health partners.

## IMPACT

- Reduce morbidity and mortality related to exposure to natural and man-made toxic substances.

# ATSDR by the Numbers

**160+**  
**EXPERTS**

In Environmental Health  
and Emergency Response  
Management

**10**  
**REGIONAL  
OFFICES**

## OUR EXPERTISE

**187**

Home to the best  
science and latest  
research for more than  
300 chemical  
substances

**600**

**INVESTIGATION  
REQUESTS**

Responded to more than  
600 community, state,  
and federal requests to  
investigate potential  
health risks

**1,000**

**TOXIC WASTE SITES**

Responsible for assessing  
health hazards in the nation's  
1,000+ toxic waste  
"Superfund" sites and in  
communities across the  
country

**34,000**

**HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**

Informed more than 34,000  
health professionals about ways  
to diagnose and treat conditions  
related to hazardous exposures

## DISEASE REGISTRY

ATSDR  
is home  
to the  
**National ALS Registry**

**16,000+**

**PATIENTS**

Collected data from over  
16,000 patients

**1,000**

**BIOSPECIMENS**

Collected biospecimens from  
over 1,000 patients

# Toxicological Profiles

- **ToxProfiles™ and ToxFAQs™**
- **Comprehensive reference materials on health effects of toxic substances**
- **Used by scientists, health providers, and regulators around the world**
- **Screening levels used to identify whether exposures can harm health**
- **187 ToxProfiles™ covering more than 300 substances**
- **400 human health minimal risk levels**

ATSDR Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

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## Toxicological Profiles

Toxicological Profiles (Tox Profiles) are a unique compilation of toxicological information on a given hazardous substance. Each peer-reviewed Tox Profile reflects a comprehensive and extensive evaluation, summary, and interpretation of available toxicological and epidemiological information on a substance.

### Announcements

- Final Tox Profile now available for:
  - [Perfluoralkyls](#)

### Tox Profiles in Progress

Public Comment Draft | In Development | Under Consideration

- [DDT, DDE, DDD](#)
- [Dinitrophenols](#)
- [1,1-Dichloroethene](#)
- [Ethylene Oxide](#)
- [1,2-Dichloroethane](#)
- [1,2,3-Trichloroethane](#)
- [DDT-dihydroxychlorobenzene](#)
- [Interaction Profile for Mixtures of Insecticide](#)

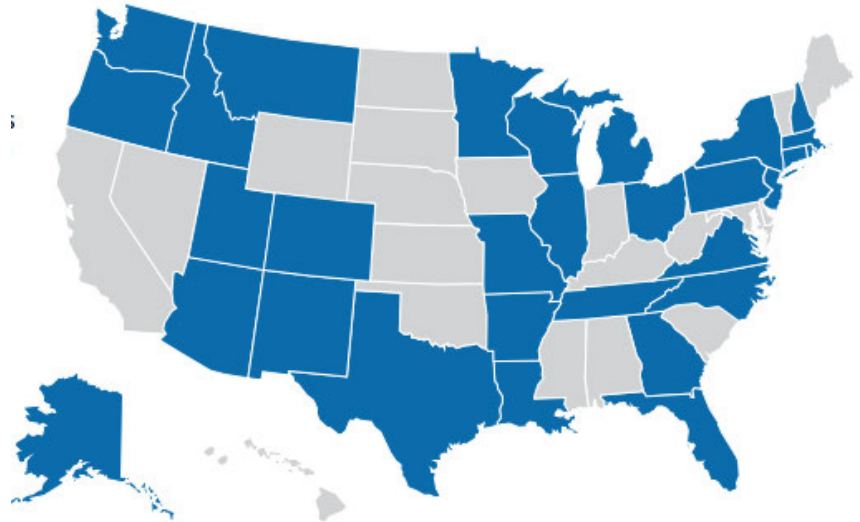
### A-Z Index of Tox Profiles

A | B | C | D | E-G | H | I-L | M | N-O | P-Q | R-S | T | U-Z

- [Acetone](#)
- [Acrolein](#)
- [Acrylamide](#)
- [Acrylonitrile](#)
- [Aldrin/Dieldrin](#)
- [Aluminum](#)
- [Americium](#)

# ATSDR's Partnership to Promote Local Efforts to Reduce Environmental Exposure (APPLETREE) Cooperative Agreement Program

- **APPLETREE** funds 30 state health departments
- **Primary goal:** give partners resources to build their capacity to assess and respond to human exposures to hazardous substances in the environment



States shown in blue have a current Cooperative Agreement until March 31, 2028

# Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units (PEHSU)

- National network of experts in reproductive and children's health issues related to environmental exposures
- Provide pediatric environmental health education to health professionals and communities, medical consultation to physicians and others caring for children
- Based at 10 academic health institutions across U.S. with experts in pediatrics, allergy/immunology, neurodevelopment, toxicology, occupational and environmental medicine, nursing, and reproductive health, as well as other specialized areas

2021 ATSDR Annual Report

## PEHSU Network: Protecting Children and Families from Environmental Hazards

NOVEMBER 12, 2024



For Public Health

### AT A GLANCE

ATSDR supports the Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units, or PEHSUs. This work helps protect the health and well-being of children and families who live or work in settings that put them at higher risk for hazardous environmental exposures.



PEHSU: A national network on reproductive and pediatric health issues and environmental exposures

### Keep in mind

"Every time a PEHSU interacts with someone, the impact ripples out to many other children. The beauty of PEHSUs is that they empower community members, health professionals, and families to take steps that really decrease environmental health risks."



# Office of Community Health Hazard Assessment (OCHHA)

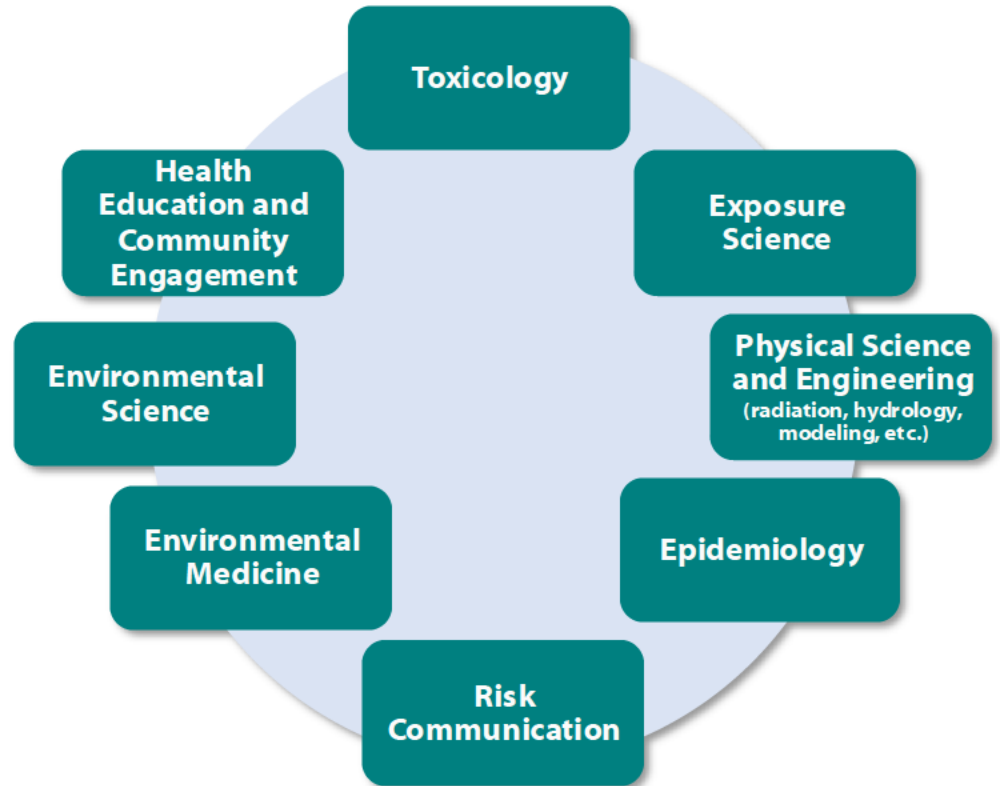
## Purpose/Mission:

To evaluate environmental contamination, exposures, and potential adverse health effects and provide actionable guidance to federal, state, tribal, local, and territorial partners and community members to mitigate and prevent environmental exposures

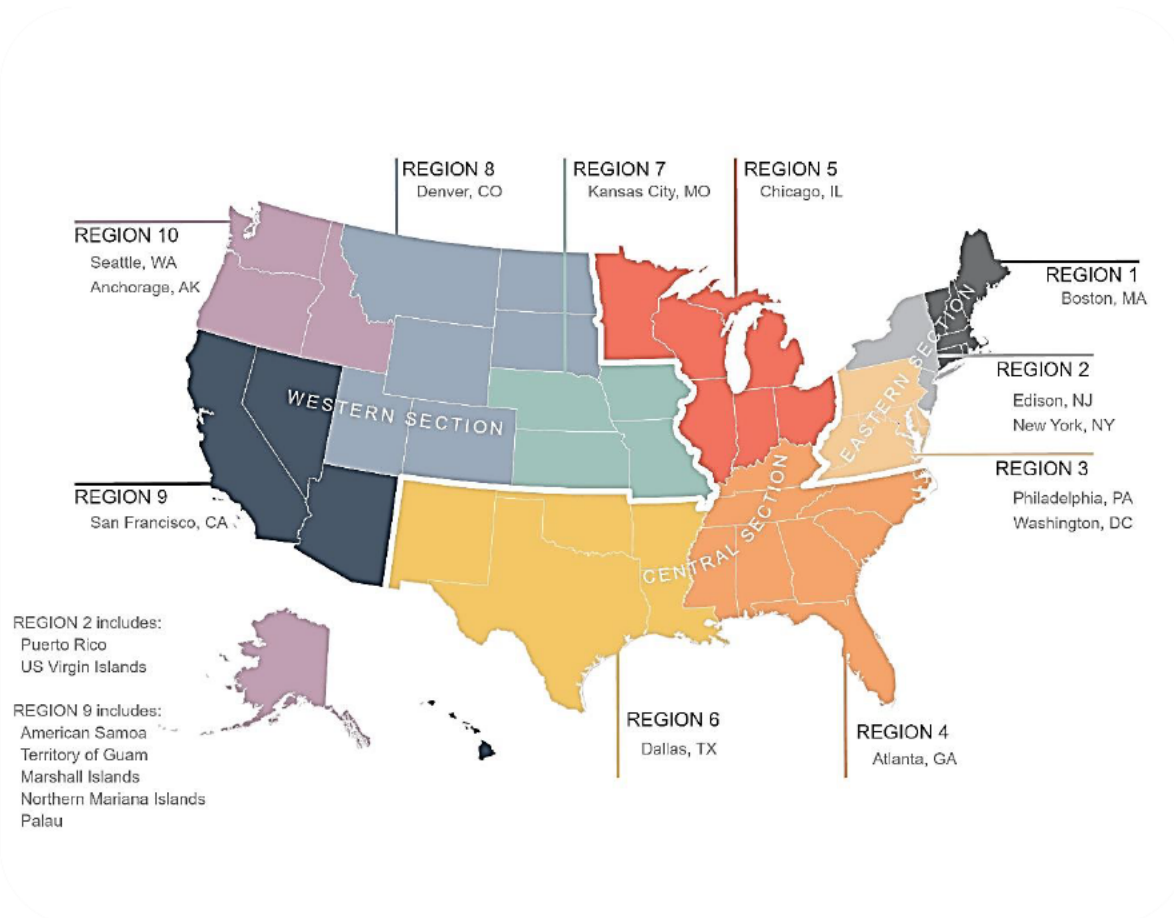
- Public Health Assessment Activities
- Exposure Investigations
- Health Studies
- Health Education
- Community Engagement
- Regional Offices

# Protecting Communities: What it Takes

Staff  
with  
diverse  
expertise



# ATSDR Regional Office Locations

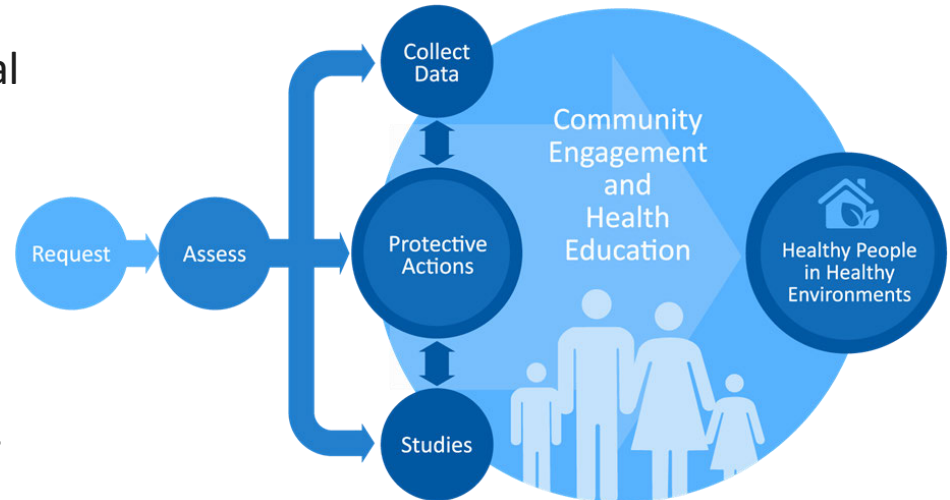


# ATSDR Regional Offices Provide National Presence

- Liaise with EPA and other federal agencies in the region and with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)/ATSDR headquarters
- Develop working relationships with tribes, state agencies, community groups, and citizens
- Provide unique technical expertise and field experience
- Implement national programs
- Participate in emergency response and preparedness activities

# Public Health Activities

- **ATSDR gets involved when**
  - A site is proposed to EPA's National Priority List (NPL)
  - Requested by a federal, state, or local agency or tribal nation
  - Petitioned by private citizens or community organizations
  - Emergency response events occur



# Public Health Activities at Sites

## Public Health Assessments (PHAs) or Health Consultations (HCs)

- Documents describe the assessment of whether people could be harmed by coming into contact with hazardous environmental contaminants and provide recommendations to protect public health.
- PHAs may address multiple contaminants and multiple exposure pathways
- HCs generally address one public health issue/question or one contaminant

## Technical Assistance

- Written response to external request for environmental public health technical and/or educational information
- Does not draw public health conclusions

## Health Education

- Educate community members or health professionals about site-specific environmental hazards

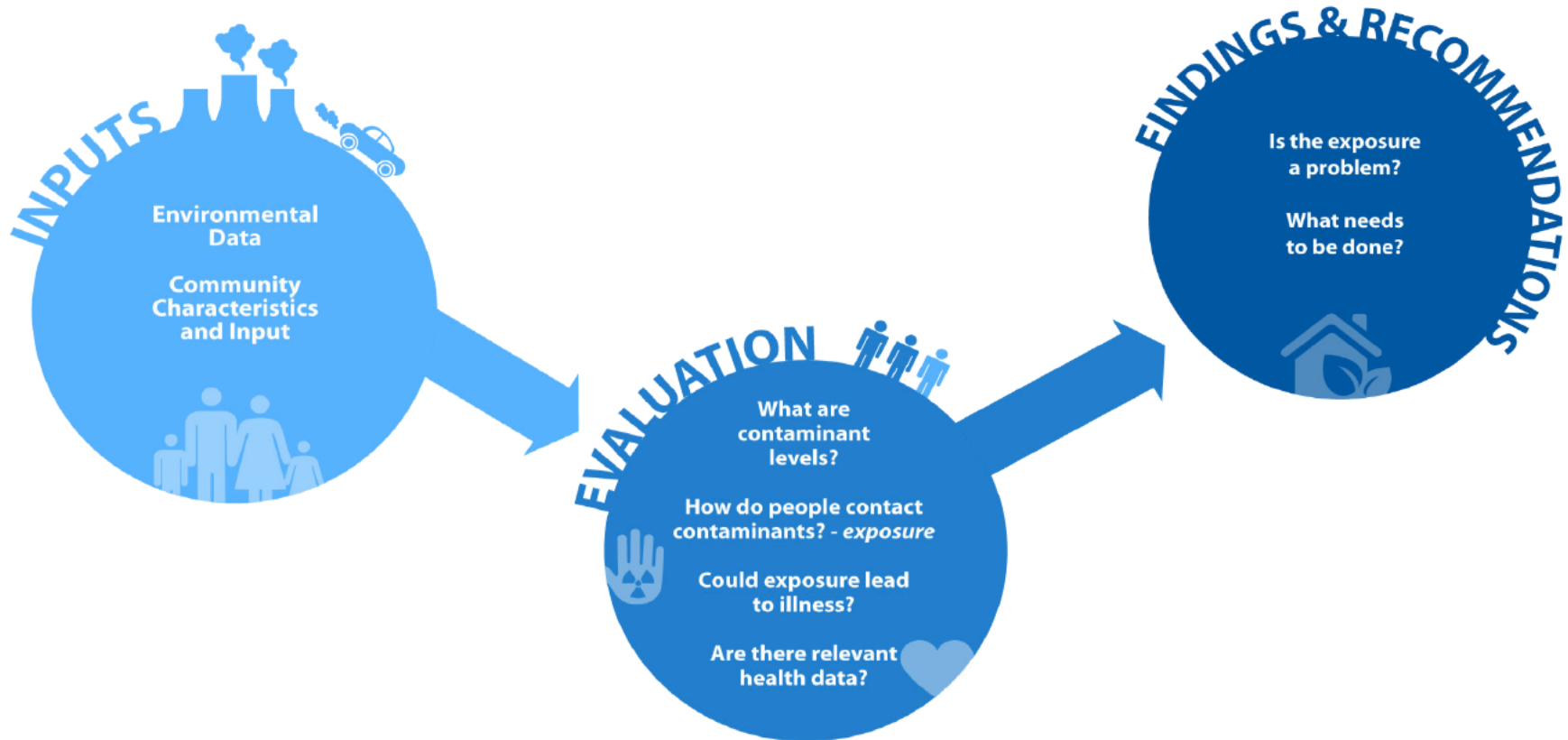
## Exposure Investigation

- Determine if people have been exposed to environmental contaminants

## Health Study

- Evaluate how exposure to an environmental contaminant may affect human health

# Public Health Assessment Process



# Public Health Assessment Impacts

Support need for *cleanup* actions

Allow *early* response to public health issues



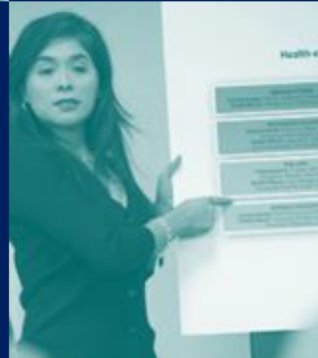
Identify potential *exposure* pathways to be characterized

Identify *new sites* or situations of health concern not under regulatory authority

*Engage* local and state health departments



Give *advice* to residents and community leaders



Provide physician *education* and community *outreach*

# ATSDR's Petition Program

## PURPOSE

- Allows the public (individuals and community organizations) to request ATSDR conduct public health activities related to a potential chemical release

## PROCESS

- Determine Eligibility
- Evaluate Request
- Decide Accept/Decline

## IMPACT

- Provides greater understanding of exposure
- Evaluates potential health risks associated with exposures
- Provides actionable guidance, if warranted

# ATSDR's Petition Process

- **ATSDR evaluates the following questions when determining to accept a petition:**
  - Has ATSDR addressed this question before?
  - Are there adequate environmental data to use?
  - Is there evidence of exposure to hazardous substances released from a contaminated site?
  - Would an ATSDR evaluation of the exposure pathway address the petitioner's concern?



# ATSDR Chemical Emergency Response Assistance

- 24-hour availability
- Multidisciplinary consult team



Images from <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/emergencyresponse/index.html>

# Questions?

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For more information, contact ATSDR

1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)

TTY: 1-888-232-6348

[www.atsdr.cdc.gov](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov)

The findings and conclusions in this presentation have not been formally disseminated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry and should not be construed to represent any agency determination or policy.

**ATSDR**