

## Executive Summary

Children spend a substantial amount of time in the school setting and are more susceptible to environmental pollutants than adults. Several completed projects in NYS found that school building problems such as visible mold, humidity problems, poor ventilation and vermin infestation were related to increased asthma hospital admission rates and school absenteeism rates as well as teacher health symptoms. Although some effort has been made in the past and some schools may have implemented their own EH programs, there is currently no formal comprehensive statewide school EH program in place and the framework in NYS is fragmented. In addition, there is limited use of existing surveillance tools and rich data sources in NYS related to school buildings, health, and occupants. To identify and fill these gaps, the primary goal of this project is to create and build capacity for implementing a sustainable K-12 Statewide School Environmental Health Program (SSEHP) useful to all NYS schools. This goal will be met through the following three major activities: 1) Build multi-agency collaborative relationships and partnerships to maximize resources for the development of a SSEHP; 2) Assess existing resources and infrastructure, and determine stakeholder capabilities; and 3) Develop a program plan that fills infrastructure gaps, tracks program outcomes and evaluates the sustainability of the program. This project is an opportunity to expand on what NYS already has done and enhance it with what EPA has developed in the SSEH guidelines. It may be the first comprehensive effort to build a sustainable partnership among all school stakeholders in NYS through assessing existing resources, infrastructure and relevant tools, identifying gaps and setting priorities to develop a step-by-step program according to the EPA SSEH guidelines. All of these activities will be integrated to advance the adoption of a SSEHP. The outputs will include reporting existing resources, gaps, assessed needs, developing a strategic plan, and developing a program plan. The primary short/medium-term outcomes during the project period will be focused on increasing awareness and utilization of the SSEHP among school stakeholders and other potential users. Beyond the grant period, medium- and long-term outcomes will include measuring the effectiveness of the SSEHP in improving the school environment and therefore enhance school occupants' health and performance including reductions in asthma hospitalizations and absenteeism, better academic performance, and greater staff productivity. The proposed work is a natural extension of our many previous activities related to school environment and occupants' health. It will build upon existing partnerships and a long history of successful collaboration with key stakeholders in NYS and will benefit from the availability of existing data regarding hospital admissions, emergency room visits, school attendance rates and test scores, and school building conditions. The project team is in a unique position to conduct this project because of many accomplishments and extensive experience in this area.

All of the eligibility factors specified in Section III (A-D) have been met. We are in accordance with CFDA 66.953, and are an eligible State entity. We are not required to match funds or cost share. We have addressed all the elements of C "Threshold Eligibility Criteria", by complying with the submission instructions and submitting our application on time through Grants.gov. Our project consists of the activities that are authorized under TSCA Title V Section 501. We are submitting one application only, and are not aware of any other applications being submitted under the same State entity. Our budget is within the allotted maximum, and the project length does not extend beyond the two year maximum. Grant funds will only be used for the purposes of the project discussed in this proposal, consistent with the statutory authority for the award.