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COUNTY HEALTH OFFICIALS RECOGNIZE EARTH DAY BY ANNOUNCING CLIMATE AND HEALTH ADAPTATION AWARDS FOR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

The New York Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO), in partnership with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), today announced funding awards to 10 local health departments to support climate related health adaptation initiatives. The awards are being made in recognition of Earth Day, which is being observed on Saturday, April 22nd.

Extreme temperatures, more frequent and intense weather events, food insecurity, and increasing incidence of vector-borne diseases are just a few of the health effects of climate change that New Yorkers are facing. With the recent [UN climate change report](#) signaling an urgent need for action, local health departments are well-positioned to support local efforts to adapt to, and mitigate, the health risks of climate change.

NYSACHO Executive Director Sarah Ravenhall said: “Given their familiarity and integration with their communities, local health departments can support climate adaptation initiatives necessary to address the numerous public health challenges associated with our changing weather cycles. We are proud to partner with the State Department of Health and Commissioner McDonald to aid in the delivery of these funding awards.”

Acting State Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald said: “Climate change is one of the greatest health challenges of our time. Even as New York State undertakes one of the most ambitious efforts in the U.S. to reduce green-house gases, we know that our local communities continue to feel the effects of a warmer, wetter climate. This mini-grant program is designed to support our local health departments’ climate resiliency efforts and seed innovative community-level public health initiatives that address their needs and priorities.”

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Local health department projects receiving funding support are:

- **Cayuga County Health Department** will increase awareness of harmful algal blooms (HABs) through the development of educational materials to be disseminated to lakefront properties in their jurisdiction.
- **Clinton County Health Department** plans to support and expand current work around increasing knowledge and practices related to food waste reduction and recycling among residents and local businesses.
- **Delaware County Public Health** will use this funding to develop and distribute tick removal kits to community members.
- **Erie County Department of Health's Office of Health Equity**, in collaboration with the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning, will disseminate information on heat emergency preparedness and how to reduce heat island effects, and will disseminate cooling neck wraps and seed kits to community members.
- **Essex County Health Department** will expand existing initiatives to recreate outdoors safely by installing sunscreen dispensers at high use public recreation areas and will develop tick prevention signage to be placed at locations with increased risk for tick-borne disease exposure. Tick kits will also be developed and distributed to community members.
- **Jefferson County Public Health Service** plans to convene a town hall meeting to provide education to residents of areas that have been affected by the emerging vector-borne disease, Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE).
- **Monroe County Department of Health** will partner with community organizations to engage with Spanish-speaking residents and provide information and resources to protect against the effects of extreme heat. Funds will be used to create and distribute bilingual, culturally relevant materials, and will additionally use their mobile unit to host pop-up educational events during June and July.
- **Orange County Department of Health** plans to host *Healthy Orange Goes Green* events to empower community members to grow their own food and plants and to increase awareness of simple action steps to help reduce climate change.
- **Otsego Department of Health** will establish a community garden on site with the county's Tiny Homes, which provide a comfortable living space for unhoused residents. The community garden will provide residents of the Tiny Homes with access to affordable and nutritious foods.
- **St. Lawrence County Public Health Department** is expanding access and education around cooling and warming centers within the county by utilizing funding to create printed materials to be distributed across the county, and will additionally develop infographics for paid advertisements on social media.

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These awards advance NYSACHO's mission to support and empower local health departments in their work to promote health and wellness, and prevent disease, disability, and injury throughout New York State. For more information on NYSACHO's climate and health adaptation work, visit: <https://www.nysacho.org/topic/climate-and-health-adaptation/>.

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