

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH NETWORK

*January-December 2025*



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# CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH NETWORK

## ANNUAL REPORT

*Fiscal Year 2025: January-December 2025*



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# A Message from CEHN's Executive Director



Dear Friends,

I took an intentional break at the end of 2025 for deep reflection, reset, and good old rest, both mentally and physically. I think all can relate to a range of challenges that we all faced over the past year. Maybe your family or friends witnessed the loss of a federal service position. Maybe your family or friends received a very hard health diagnosis. Or maybe you and/or loved ones were impacted by extreme heat waves, flooding, or wildfires. Life has definitely been happening and the need to hold and support deep connections could not have been more prevalent than in 2025.

At CEHN, we celebrated the 10th Anniversary of Children's Environmental Health (CEH) Day, a day of action with nearly 200 global partners. As part of that celebration, our Partners helped to secure more CEH Day Proclamations than ever before and we honored amazing trailblazers with distinctions for their steadfast leadership. We re-launched CEHN's Children's Environmental Health Advocacy Training, hosted 12 interns, and co-hosted 3 summer fellows (2 domestic and 1 international) with the National Center for Healthy Housing. The CEHN team worked very hard to finalize and distribute children's environmental health profiles for all 50 states! We continue to receive feedback on the value of those resources from partners across the country. CEHN continued to hold leadership positions among key coalitions and networks, and increased our participation in state and national child protective advocacy efforts.

CEHN completed our fourth year as the National Coordinating Center for the six Collaborative Children's Environmental Health Research and Translation (CEHRT) Centers. Our CEHRT Annual Meeting was held in Washington, DC and included a Congressional Briefing and more visits to elected officials to highlight the importance of the program.

Our Eco-Healthy Child Care® Program launched "Little Lungs, Big Futures," an indoor air quality program in six states (CA, TX, AZ, SC, MI, GA) and the city of San Francisco! Together with critical community partners, our staff worked to provide trainings, technical assistance, investments, and air quality monitoring in early learning facilities. In just one year of work, we are collectively demonstrating that education, building awareness, technical assistance, and support makes a difference in the lives of children and those serving them daily.

Part of my reflection was focused on the past 25 years that I have spent serving CEHN. We have witnessed a continued rise in peer-reviewed research, many more partners are now incorporating child health vulnerability messaging into their work and communications, some funders have begun to create specific programs that work to elevate children's health and movement building overall. And, our mission is needed more than ever. Continuous attacks on public health, safety, justice, and climate programs and related regulations have come at great costs. Without safeguards in place to reduce harmful exposures, especially experienced by children and all vulnerable populations, increasing numbers of children will be negatively impacted. That then creates generational impacts for years to come.

CEHN's aim is to stay on course and leverage our mission in as many places of influence as possible. Within our team we welcomed Haleemah Atobiloye, Program and Communications Strategist and Kristen Herbert, Senior Advisor for Advancement. Our team now has bases in Utah, Ohio, Virginia, Texas, the Washington, DC area, and Rhode Island. As always, we stand ready to work with you and collectively expand our reach and influence. Poll after poll shows that children are valued and should be invested in. CEHN understands that responsibility well and will continue to work putting those aspirations into real movement and action. Join us in reviewing our year of work and in our work ahead to make children the

*Nneke Obot Witherington*

# Children's Environmental Health Network Goals

- 1 To stimulate prevention-oriented research
- 2 To educate health professionals, policy makers, and community members in preventative strategies
- 3 To elevate public awareness of environmental hazards to children
- 4 To promote development of sound public health and child-focused national policy

## Where we focus



## How We Work



## What This Moment Demands of Us

As an organization devoted to protecting the health and well-being of children, we find ourselves at a pivotal moment. Today's environmental conditions, alongside the unstable political, economic, and social climate, make it clearer than ever that children's environmental health must be at the center of national and global conversations.

Children are uniquely vulnerable. Their bodies are still developing, they eat, breathe, and drink more per pound than adults, and they have more years of life ahead in which early exposures can manifest as chronic disease. When environmental protections weaken or climate-related threats intensify, it is children who bear the brunt first and for the longest.



Climate change is already reshaping childhood. Increasing heat waves, worsening air quality, more frequent wildfires, and the spread of vector-borne diseases are not hypothetical futures; they are daily realities for many families. Children are experiencing more asthma attacks associated with pollution and wildfire smoke, more heat-related illnesses, and more disruptions to learning and play due to extreme weather. Each of these impacts carry long-term consequences for physical, cognitive, and emotional development.

Communities are also facing widening inequities. The environmental challenges of this era do not fall evenly. Children from families with less wealth, communities of color, and rural and tribal communities continue to face disproportionate exposures to industrial pollution, unsafe drinking water, substandard housing, and climate-driven hazards. These inequities are rooted in longstanding structural disparities. In moments of political transition or competing national priorities, these communities risk being deprioritized by leaders yet again.

Policy decisions made today will define children's futures. We are living through a time when foundational environmental and public-health policies and regulations are under threat of weakening and reversal, despite the intensifying federal spotlight on children's chronic illnesses, including the contributing role of environmental hazards. We must hold our elected officials and decisionmakers accountable to drive true positive change based in strong science.



The good news is that we have unprecedented knowledge and tools to protect children's health. Advances in research- including community-based participatory research, and evidence-based resources and tools such as climate-resilience strategies, equip us to respond effectively, but only if we choose to act. Families, clinicians, scientists, educators, and advocates are working together more closely than ever. This is a moment of both urgency and opportunity.

This is why our focus cannot falter. Children cannot protect themselves, vote, regulate emissions, redesign infrastructure, or influence policy on their own. They rely on adults, institutions, and networks like ours to safeguard the environments that shape their bodies, their brains, and their futures. The stakes of inaction are high, but the benefits of investing in healthy environments for children are profound: stronger communities, reduced healthcare burdens, improved learning, and a more resilient future for all.

**Our responsibility is clear: act now, advocate boldly, and ensure that every child grows up in a world that protects their right to breathe clean air, drink safe water, and thrive in a stable climate.**

At CEHN, we hope to drive this movement forward and create a safer, equitable future for all children. And we hope you'll join us. Our work cannot be done alone, but only through the collective efforts of the incredible community of child health champions of which we're forever grateful to be a part.

# Eco-Healthy Child Care®

## Eco-Healthy Child Care®: Growing Impact, Healthier Spaces for Children

The Eco-Healthy Child Care® (EHCC) program continues to be one of CEHN's most effective, far-reaching strategies for protecting children where they spend much of their time: early care and education settings. Over the past year, EHCC made significant strides in expanding its reach, deepening its equity focus, and strengthening the systems that support child care providers across the country. Through new funding, strong partnerships, innovative tools, and national leadership, EHCC is helping create healthier, safer environments for children and the caregivers who support them.

### Little Lungs, Big Futures

A major highlight of the year was the launch of the "Little Lungs, Big Futures" Environmental Justice Indoor Air Quality Initiative, supported by a \$500,000 Google Environmental Justice Grant for a two-year project (2025–2027). This initiative brings EHCC's evidence-based model directly into communities that have been historically overburdened by environmental hazards.

This project is in partnership with the University of Maryland School of Public Health doctoral researcher Blean Girma and the Transforming Health & Equity Environmental Justice Lab. With our partners, CEHN is collaborating with six environmental justice community partners and one community development financial institution (CDFI) across the country, each of which supports 8-10 local child care facilities through the initiative:

- Partnership for Southern Equity (Atlanta, GA)
- New Alpha Community Development Corp. (Florence, SC)
- Latinas Contra Cancer (Santa Clara County, CA)
- Air Alliance Houston (Houston, TX)
- Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (Flagstaff, AZ)
- Green Door Initiative (Detroit, MI)
- Low Income Investment Fund (San Francisco, CA) (CDFI)

Participating facilities receive:

- EHCC's e-learning course for staff
- EHCC Endorsement
- Continuous indoor air quality data
- High-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters and purifiers
- Virtual and in-person technical assistance
- Multiple site assessments
- Mini-grants to implement facility improvements or safer product purchases



Top: Green Door Initiative representative Jolani Perez presents at the American Public Health Association's Annual meeting (APHA 2025) with CEHN's Nsedu Witherspoon Center: Air purifier setup in participating child care facility  
Bottom: The office space of Latinas Contra Cancer in San Jose, CA, after receiving the preferable supplies orders of 3 child care facilities (courtesy of Adriana Garcia, LCC)

Using ArcGIS EJ mapping tools, the initiative prioritizes communities with the greatest need. Facilities are equipped with PurpleAir Flex monitors to track real-time particulate matter (PM2.5), followed by the installation of portable air purifiers and continued indoor air quality monitoring. Preliminary data collection and analysis is already underway, helping build the evidence base for healthier child care environments.

Participating providers have already begun purchasing preferred products using the mini-grant funds and making improvements to their facilities. One provider in South Carolina plans to remove carpeting, while another provider in Houston is interested in installing shade sails over the outdoor play area.

## Expanding Reach Through Strategic Partnerships

EHCC continued to build strong partnerships to expand its impact. Collaborative projects with Informed Green Solutions (IGS)– experts in cleaning supplies and product selection for environmental health and safety– and Educare Network– a national child care network with 25 schools– aim to model the success of Little Lungs, Big Futures.

EHCC also strengthened its engagement in the P-5 Federal Network, coordinated by Zero to Three, working alongside national leaders in early childhood, health, and equity to protect federal programs essential to young children and their families.



*Left: CEHN staff at APHA 2025*

*Center: EHCC Program Manager Jessica Price at the National Association for Family Child Care 2025 Conference*

*Right: Jessica Price and friends at the 2025 National Association for the Education of Young Children Conference*

## Conferences, Networking, and Engagement

EHCC was present at several national and state conferences in 2025, speaking with audiences of child care providers, regulators, and public health professionals about the program and ongoing projects.

- In April, at the New York Association for the Education of Young Children (NYAEYC) annual conference, the first-ever EHCC-focused conference track was conducted with seven presenters speaking on different topics pertaining to environmental health in child care.
- In July, at the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) annual conference, EHCC gave a presentation about how child care providers in home settings can protect children's health in a changing climate.
- In October, the EHCC conference track model was successfully replicated at the Washington Association for the Education of Young Children (WAEYC) annual conference in October, which featured eleven presenters.

- Also in October, EHCC presented for the first time at the Zero to Three national conference in Baltimore, Maryland.
- In October, EHCC also presented at the Black Child Development Institute Conference in Atlanta, Georgia.
- In November, Little Lungs, Big Futures was presented as a full panel session at the American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting– the premier conference for public health workers in the U.S. This presentation featured a program overview, testimonials from partners and participating providers, as well as initial indoor air quality data presented by our data evaluator.
- Also in November, at the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) annual conference, EHCC gave a presentation about how child care providers in center and home settings can protect children’s health in a changing climate.
- In December, at the Texas Children in Nature Network (TCiNN) annual conference, EHCC gave a presentation about how to keep children safe in extreme heat and poor air quality.



*CEHN staff and partners before their APHA 2025 presentation about Little Lungs, Big Futures*

These conferences allow us to showcase our work, uplift our resources, and make connections with audiences who may not otherwise interact with us. For example, an EHCC staff member attending the America the Beautiful For All (AtB4A) conference was able to make a connection with a member of Air Alliance Houston (AAH), which is now an integral partnership in Little Lungs, Big Futures.

## Outreach, Engagement, and Technical Assistance

EHCC maintained a robust suite of engagement tools, including:

- Bilingual monthly emails
- Spotlight Child Care Provider articles
- Blog posts offering helpful tips and resources
- English and Spanish endorsement checklists
- Over 30 fact sheets and FAQs
- Ongoing virtual technical assistance for endorsed providers

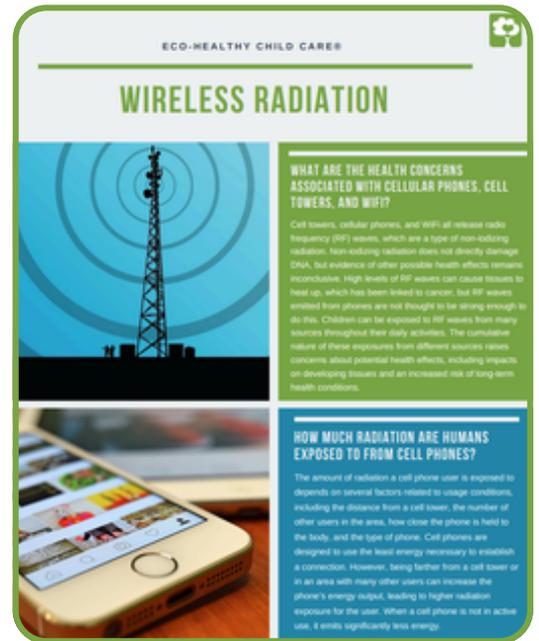
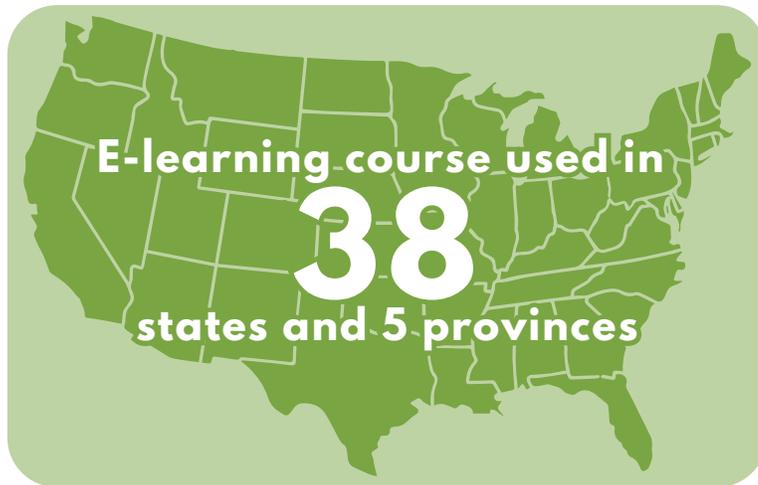
*EHCC Program Associate, Elisabeth Repp, presents at a National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA) licensing seminar*



This year, EHCC also released a [new FAQ on wireless radiation and children's health](#).

The EHCC e-learning course continued to grow in reach and sustainability. In 2025, course usage increased to 424 users across 38 states and 5 Canadian provinces.

As of December 2025, 664 child care facilities are Eco-Healthy Child Care® endorsed, representing over 70,000 children benefiting from safer, healthier environments.



### Looking Ahead

From advancing environmental justice to influencing national standards and supporting providers on the ground, EHCC has had a year of meaningful growth and impact. By combining science, equity, education, and partnership, the Eco-Healthy Child Care® program continues to translate CEHN’s mission into real-world change—ensuring that the places where children learn and grow are healthier today and more resilient for the future.

## Protecting Children Through Policy

Protecting children from environmental hazards requires strong, science-based public policy and persistent advocacy to defend it. Over the past year, during a period of significant political and regulatory upheaval, CEHN worked alongside many partners to urge prioritization of children’s health in all policies.

CEHN remained focused on a clear goal: protecting children, including those most vulnerable, from harmful environmental exposures and the growing impacts of climate change. We tracked fast-moving federal actions, collaborated closely with partners, and spoke up in support of federal partners and protective policies and also in opposition to policies that threatened children’s health, health equity, and the systems designed to protect them.

## Defending Science-Based Protections for Children

Throughout the year, CEHN responded to repeated efforts to weaken environmental and public health safeguards. Many of these policies directly affect the air children breathe, the water they drink, and the food they eat.

### Key federal policy priorities included:

- **Clean air protections**, including preserving the Clean Air Act and ensuring the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) retains the authority, capacity, and commitment to strong, independent science needed to effectively regulate air pollution in accordance with and following the intent of the law. Among other actions, CEHN advocated for protecting the integrity of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards determination process, and for protecting critical amendments to the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards.
- **Clean water protections**, including preserving the scope of the EPA's jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act to protect water bodies, fighting against weakening industry permitting processes which would result in increased water pollution, and defending the EPA's Lead and Copper Rule Improvements, which strengthen protections against lead exposure through drinking water and accelerate lead service line replacements.
- **Chemical safety**, including calls to reinstate protections against trichloroethylene (TCE), a toxic chemical linked to serious health harms, preserving the EPA's Integrated Risk Information System, and protecting the Toxic Substances Control Act as updated in 2016 by the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act.
- **Climate protections**, such as opposing the repeal of vehicle emissions standards and the reconsideration of the EPA's 2009 Endangerment Finding, which forms the legal foundation for regulating greenhouse gases.

CEHN submitted formal comments, provided oral testimony, and signed onto more than 30 coalition letters to federal agencies and Congress, consistently centering children's unique vulnerabilities in these debates.

## Standing Up for Children's Health Programs and Families

Children's environmental health is inextricably linked with broader issues that impact families. CEHN also advocated strongly for programs that support children's and families' overall health and resilience. We urged Congress and federal agencies to:

- **Protect Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and other critical safety-net programs** that are essential for children's health and development and that work to combat health disparities.
- **Maintain funding for the EPA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, and for key federal programs and priorities, such as the National Asthma Control Program, clean air programs, and healthy schools initiatives.



*CEHN Summer Interns Adiaha Witherspoon and Brandon Williams on Capitol Hill*

- **Oppose cuts and restructuring** at the Department of Health and Human Services that would weaken programs serving states and their communities, children and families, such as the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program and the Environmental Public Health Tracking Network.

CEHN emphasized that reducing access to these programs, limiting their scope, or impeding their activities, would worsen health inequities and increase children’s vulnerability to environmental harms.

### Preserving Regulatory Processes

CEHN also opposed legislation that would undermine federal agencies’ regulatory authority, and also the transparency and accountability in the promulgation of environmental public health protections.

CEHN pushed back against bills including:

- **The Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny (REINS) Act**, which would require Congress to approve major public health and environmental rules proposed by federal agencies, slowing or stopping the enactment of potential health protections.
- **The Midnight Rules Relief Act**, which would allow Congress to overturn multiple later-term regulations promulgated by an outgoing administration at once, via a single joint resolution under the Congressional Review Act.
- **The Guidance Out Of Darkness Act (GOOD) Act**, which would force federal agencies to publish all existing and repealed regulatory guidance in a central online archive, which would be extremely costly and time-consuming for agencies and undermine clarity, transparency, and accessibility for the public.



*CEHN Board member Leyla McCurdy at the November 2025 Rally for Public Health in Washington, DC*



*Child Health Champions from across the country pose with elected officials issuing requested 2025 Children’s Environmental Health Day Proclamations*

### Advancing State and Local Action

CEHN also supported strong state and local efforts to address environmental health issues, recognizing the importance of state and local leadership on advancing child health protections:

- Supported California bills to address polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS or “forever chemicals”) in drinking water and ban antibacterial chemicals in consumer products.
- Provided testimony in Maryland to ban PFAS in pesticides.
- Urged the District of Columbia to fund lead service line replacement.
- Backed state and local policies to protect children from extreme heat and climate-related risks.



## Working in Partnership

CEHN continued to participate in major national coalitions focused on clean air, clean water, environmental justice, climate action, and early childhood policy. There is power in raising a unified voice in support of safe and healthy environments and a sound public health infrastructure, and we are pleased to work collectively with exceptional colleagues. We collaborate with our medical, public health, health equity, and environmental partners, and serve a leadership role in several of these coalitions and collaboratives:

Healthy Air Partners \* Clean Water for All (lead co-chair) \* Friends of National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences \* CDC Coalition \* National Council for Environmental Health & Equity (co-chair) \* UCSF PRHE Science Action Network \* The America the Beautiful for All Coalition (co-chair) \* Climate Action Campaign \* P-5 Network (Early Childhood Leaders) \* Network for Resilient Pre-K to 12 Schools in Extreme Climates \* National Environmental Network (administrator) \* National Coalition for Healthy Schools (Advisor)

*Photos of CEHN staff and Board working and celebrating with partners throughout the year!*



# NIEHS Collaborative Centers in Children's Environmental Health Research and Translation

In the fourth year of this five year program, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) Collaborative Centers in Children's Environmental Health Research and Translation (CEHRT) have continued to demonstrate the power of coordinated, transdisciplinary action to protect children's health. CEHN, as the National Coordinating Center, has played a central role in convening, supporting, and amplifying this network; strengthening collaboration across centers, advancing policy engagement, and helping position CEHRT to demonstrate impact at scale.



## What is CEHRT?

The Collaborative Centers in Children's Environmental Health Research Translation, or CEHRT, is a national network of six academic centers across the country developing practical solutions to protect children's health from environmental hazards.

CEHRT Centers translate the latest research into community-led interventions and educational resources to diverse audiences. They support early-career researchers and community partners to provide education and outreach for healthcare practitioners, policymakers, child care providers, researchers, educators, and families.

To learn more about the CEHRT Network, [visit cehrt.cehn.org](http://visit.cehrt.cehn.org).

### Strategic Reflection and Forward Planning

CEHN organized the CEHRT Network's fourth Annual Meeting, which was held on September 16–18, 2025 and hosted in Washington, DC by the Bridging Research, Lung Health, and the Environment (BREATHE) Children's Center at Johns Hopkins University. The meeting focused on program evaluation, multi-center collaboration opportunities, and strategic planning for year five of the grant, and feedback to inform any future iteration of the program. The meeting agenda also provided ample time for networking and relationship strengthening and a keynote address from Dr. Linda Birnbaum, former Director of the NIEHS and the National Toxicology Program.

### Translating Research Into Policy Impact

CEHN also organized a CEHRT Hill Day on September 17, in conjunction with the annual meeting, to strengthen the connection between children's environmental health research and federal policymaking. The Hill Day included a Congressional briefing and a series of Congressional office visits for CEHRT members.

The CEHRT Capitol Hill Briefing was sponsored by Senator Chris Van Hollen of Maryland and supported by the Endocrine Society. The event featured presentations from four of the six CEHRT Centers and included a virtual reality hurricane simulation developed by the University of Georgia and Emory University's Center for Children's Health Assessment, Research Translation, and Combating Environmental Risk (CHARTER) in partnership with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, offering policymakers a powerful, immersive demonstration of climate-related risks to children.



*CEHRT Members at the 2025 Working meeting*

The successful briefing was attended by a diverse audience, including staff from offices of Congressional leaders and federal partners.

CEHN scheduled meetings for CEHRT members with Congressional offices in order for each contingent to introduce their Center and expertise as a resource for their representative members of Congress.



*CHARTER members and CEHN Intern Anna Consolazio meet with Senator Jon Ossoff*

Pairing these meetings with in-district follow-ups has been an effective way to help policymakers understand the value of National Institute of Health (NIH) programs, CEHRT research translation, and children's environmental health in general.

To prepare researchers for Hill Day engagements, CEHN and CHARTER co-hosted a virtual training session for CEHRT members on how to meet policymakers and best practices for communicating research to broader audiences, including elected officials.

Looking forward, CEHN will help to facilitate continued opportunities to brief policymakers on emerging environmental health threats and sustain momentum. This includes a CEHRT wildfire briefing in 2026, as well as coordinating additional engagement between CEHRT members and their elected officials.



*2025 CEHRT Congressional Briefing*

## Meetings and Presentations:

CEHN is raising the profile of the CEHRT network within the field of public health. CEHN organized a CEHRT session for the American Public Health Association's Annual Meeting and Expo (APHA 2025) in Washington, DC with the Philadelphia Regional Center for Children's Environmental Health (PRCCEH) at the University of Pennsylvania, the BREATHE Children's Center at Johns Hopkins University, New York University (NYU) Collaborative Center for Children's Environmental Health Research and Translation, and CHARTER. The presentations showcased: community partnerships that improve children's health; initiatives that empower children to be health leaders; the latest research on the health impacts of plastics; and lessons learned from establishing meaningful partnerships to achieve shared goals and create a greater impact. You can read more about the presentation in CEHN's Substack article, [\*Kids, Plastics, and Community Power.\*](#)



CEHRT centers panel at APHA 2025



CEHN Executive Director, Nsedu Obot Witherspoon presents

## Children's Environmental Health And Climate Justice

All children regardless of race, income, or zip code have the right to a healthy environment and to be protected from environmental harms. Children in communities with lower wealth and communities of color face increased pollution and harmful environmental exposures, have higher levels of contaminants in their bodies, and experience more illness or disability such as asthma and learning disabilities. These children are also often the first to experience the direct and indirect impacts of climate change, and are the most severely affected. These disparities are a direct result of structural racism, economic inequality, and systemic disinvestment from many communities of color. It also means the children in these communities are often less likely to benefit from protective policies.

At CEHN, environmental justice is not a separate issue; it is foundational to our mission. Over the past year, CEHN has continued to center equity, science, and community voice in our work, while supporting a broad ecosystem of environmental justice organizations and coalitions working to protect children and families across the country.

### What Environmental Justice Means for Children

Environmental justice recognizes that environmental harms are rooted in historic and ongoing inequities, including racism, underinvestment, and political exclusion. For children, these inequities can manifest as higher rates of asthma, lead poisoning, developmental delays, heat-related illness, and other preventable health conditions.

Environmental justice for children means:

- Clean air, safe drinking water, and healthy environments where children live, learn, and play
- Policies that prioritize communities facing the greatest cumulative risks
- Meaningful involvement of families, youth, and caregivers in decisions that affect their health
- Preventive systems that stop harm before it occurs, rather than responding after children are already sick



CEHN works to ensure that children’s unique vulnerabilities—and the inequities they face—are reflected in environmental policy, public health decision-making, and advocacy at every level.

CEHN staff continues to serve as national leaders in environmental health and justice, centering equity, community-informed science, and the understanding that children’s health cannot be separated from broader systems of injustice. In 2025, CEHN has deepened partnerships with environmental justice organizations, strengthened coalition-based advocacy, and ensured that children’s health remains central in environmental and public health policy debates.

This year, CEHN’s Executive Director, Nsedu Obot Witherspoon was recognized for 2025 Mid-Atlantic Environmental Justice Impact at the Center for Engagement, Environmental Justice, and Health INpowering Communities’ (CEEJH INC) 11th Environmental Justice and Health Disparities Symposium. This summer, Witherspoon was also featured in George Washington University Milken Center for Advancing the American Dream’s flagship exhibition, the American Dream Experience. Additionally, Haleemah Atobiloye, CEHN Program & Communications Strategist was recognized as one of Young, Gifted, and Green’s 40 Under 40 Awardees in 2025.

## **Strengthening Environmental Justice Through Coalitions**

Environmental justice work is collective by nature, and CEHN plays an active role in supporting, convening, and strengthening coalitions that advance equity-centered environmental protections. CEHN serves in leadership and support roles across a wide range of environmental justice-aligned coalitions, including America the Beautiful for All Coalition, the National Environmental Network, the National Council for Environmental Health & Equity, Healthy Air Partners, and Clean Water for All.

CEHN also works closely with the American Public Health Association (APHA) and APHA committees, helping bridge environmental justice, public health, and children’s health communities. Through joint advocacy, publications, training, and coalition action, CEHN and our partners amplify evidence-based, equity-driven solutions that protect children.

By supporting these networks, CEHN helps ensure that environmental justice efforts are connected, coordinated, and grounded in children’s health science.

# Children's Environmental Health Movement

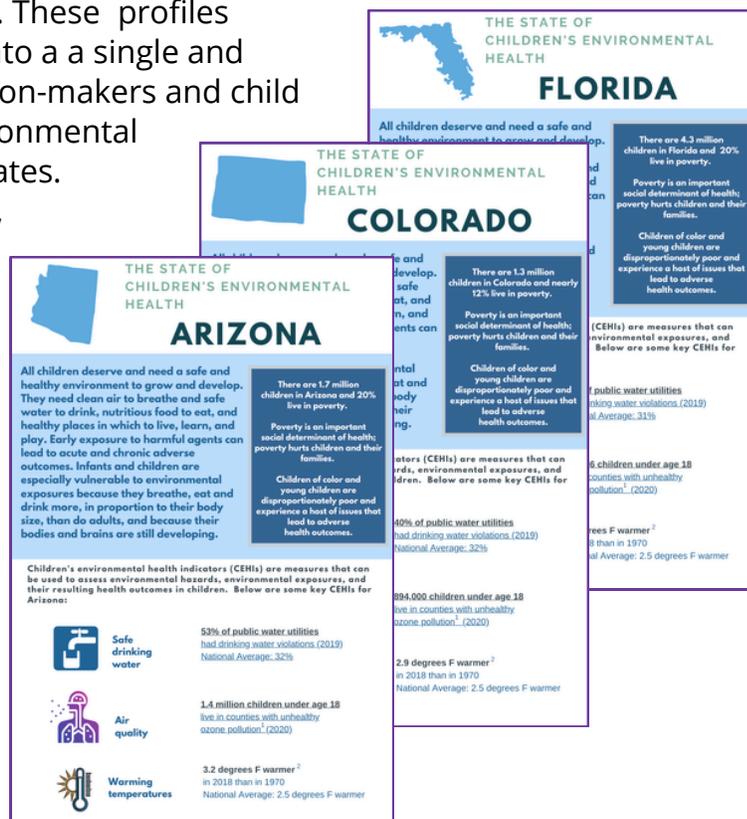


The Children's Environmental Health Network exists to build, strengthen, and advance the children's environmental health movement. Over the past year, that movement has grown in reach, depth, and impact. Through data-driven resources, policy engagement, coalition-building, and people-powered advocacy, CEHN has helped connect researchers, health professionals, caregivers, educators, youth, and policymakers around a shared goal: ensuring every child grows up in a safe, healthy environment. In a challenging national landscape, CEHN made meaningful progress by equipping advocates with tools, elevating children's voices, and turning concern into coordinated action.

## Creating State Profiles

This year, CEHN was proud to release updated children's environmental health profiles for all 50 states. These profiles compile nationally collected state-level data into a single and accessible set of resources that provide decision-makers and child health advocates a glimpse of children's environmental health indicators (CEHIs) in their respective states. CEHIs include data on environmental hazards, exposures, select children's health outcomes, and federal funding for key state environmental health programs.

Decisions made, and capacity, at the state and local level play a major role in determining the environmental health protections and inequities that our children experience every day. For policymakers, advocates, and community leaders to address children's environmental health concerns effectively, they must first understand the conditions in their own jurisdictions.



A key takeaway from this project is that there are very few nationally coordinated datasets with relevant, state-level, meaningful children's environmental health indicators that are accessible, regularly updated, and uniformly defined. CEHN advocates the need for more intentional efforts to address this gap.

Alongside the data, CEHN also highlights state spotlights, showcasing where states are making progress and offering models that others can follow. [Read state profiles and good-news spotlights.](#)

## Advancing Lead Service Line Replacement

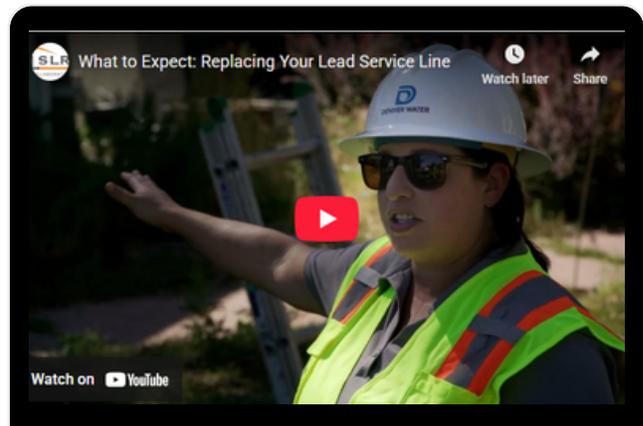
CEHN continues to advance the national effort to replace lead service lines. Lead in drinking water remains a serious threat to children's health, particularly for children in communities with less wealth and communities of color.

CEHN contributed a children's health lens to discussions around lead service line replacement, emphasizing:

- The urgency of full (not partial) lead pipe replacement
- The need for equitable implementation so the highest-risk communities are prioritized
- Clear communication with families about timelines, risks, and protections

By grounding infrastructure conversations in children's health outcomes, CEHN helped reinforce that lead service line replacement is a public health and environmental justice imperative.

CEHN staff continued to support the Lead Service Line Collaborative (LSLRC) in 2025, which put out a [new educational video detailing what to expect during the lead service line replacement process](#). To mark the 10th anniversary of the collaborative, the LSLRC opened nominations for the "10 Years, 10 Leaders: Honoring Excellence in Lead Service Line Replacement" award. The awards event will take place in June 2026.



## Building Child Health Champions Through Advocacy and Training

October 9, 2025 marked a decade of cross-sector work toward safer, healthier environments for children through Children's Environmental Health Day (CEH Day). To celebrate and galvanize the movement, CEHN hosted a nationwide campaign to build grassroots advocacy capacity, center community and youth stories, and uplift a unified, hopeful movement in the face of protective policy rollbacks, cuts to critical programs and workforce, and growing public health threats. Children at the Center: Advocacy in Action blended personal narrative, training, and media strategy, activating a diverse array of stakeholders and children's environmental health advocates—including youth, public health professionals, child care providers, educators, caregivers, researchers, and environmental professionals—to become vocal champions for children's health and justice.

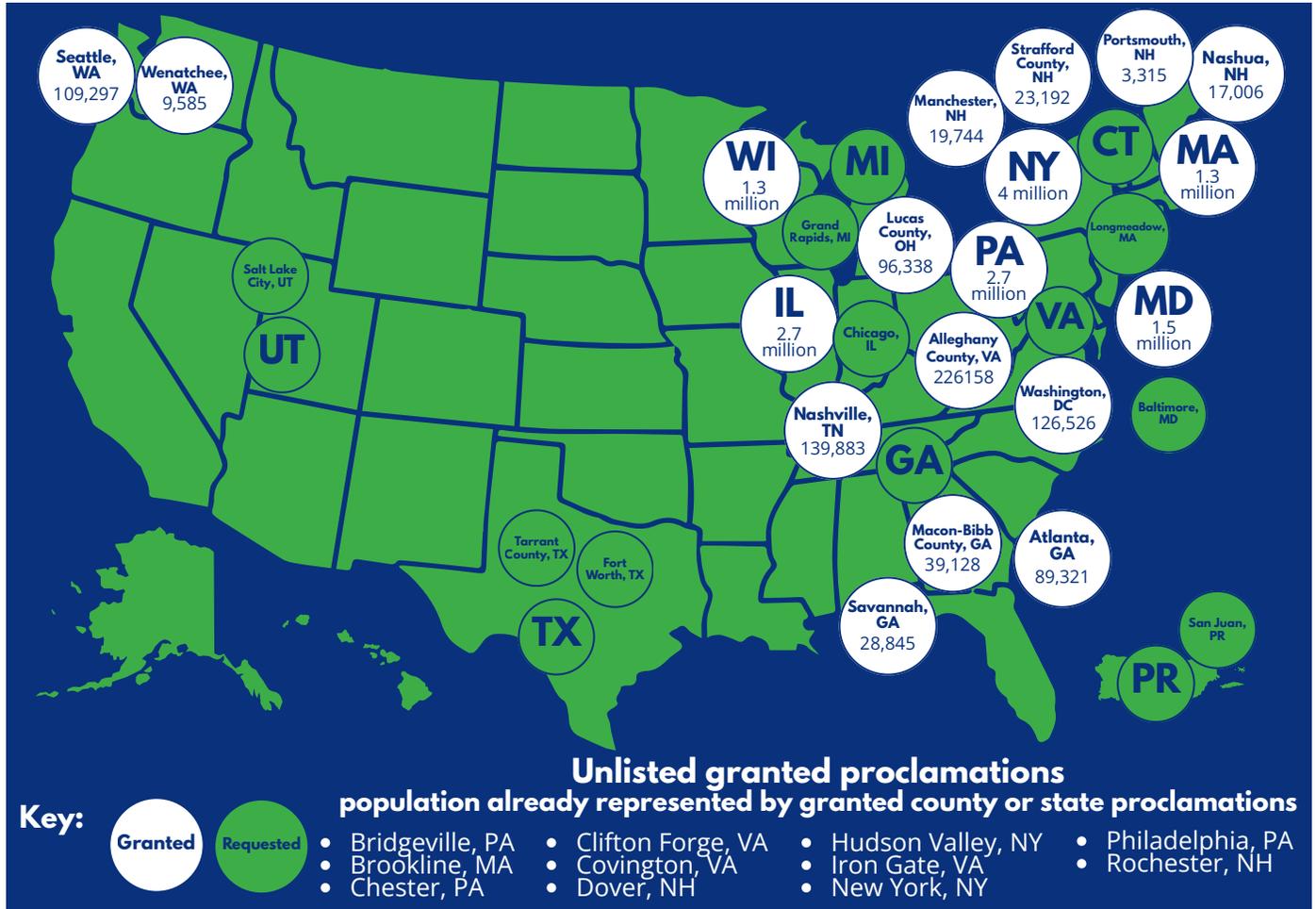
CEHN and partners hosted four virtual advocacy training over the summer, which were attended by nearly 200 advocates. Each training was designed to help child health champions build power, tell our stories, and take meaningful action together. Each session integrated youth voices, walked participants through the logistics of advocacy, and encouraged authentic storytelling as strategy. Once participants completed a training, they were offered customized resources and hands on, individual assistance with requesting Children's Environmental Health Day proclamations, setting up visits with elected officials, crafting their story, and even pitching it to relevant media.



## Children's Environmental Health Day 2025

This year, 188 Partners (including 22 new Partners) came together to celebrate the 10th Annual Children's Environmental Health Day (CEH Day). This was a milestone moment for the movement, demonstrating both its growth and its resilience.

Child health advocates requested 60 proclamations from their state and local leaders in 2025—more than in any previous year. At least 43 were granted, covering 14.4 million children.



2025 CEH Day proclamations and the children they protect

Partners hosted over 90 total CEH Day events in 2025, including webinars, symposiums, art contests and exhibitions, read-alongs, and health fairs. For the second year in a row, CEHN hosted a children's art contest for CEH Day, as well as a national Eco-Healthy Read-in.

Submissions to CEHN's 2025 CEH Day Art Contest



## The Annual Child Health Advocate Awards

These awards honor outstanding children’s environmental health leaders in Policy, Science, Community Advocacy, and Arts/Media. These child health champions have devoted themselves to a vision of a cleaner, healthier environment for children. The Nsedu Obot Witherspoon (NOW) Youth Leadership Award was created as part of CEHN’s 20th-anniversary celebration in 2012, in honor of Executive Director Nsedu Obot Witherspoon. This award honors a young person who has demonstrated exceptional environmental health leadership focused on protecting human health, especially of our most vulnerable populations.

## 20th Children’s Environmental Health Advocate Awards

The 20th Annual Children’s Environmental Health Day Awards and 10th Annual NOW Youth Leadership Awards were the keystone of our CEH Day celebrations. CEHN staff and Board hosted a series of Fireside chats with awardees, discussing their work’s challenges and hopes leading up to the annual Awards celebration.

On CEH Day, the organization hosted our community at Woodend Sanctuary in Chevy Chase, Maryland. We were honored to celebrate the wins of our field with empowering speeches, a youth musical performance, food, drink, dancing, and community.



## 2025 Child Health Advocate Awardees:

### Art and Media:

Rozina Kanchwala, MSc  
*Creative entrepreneur, playwright, and organic farmer, Eco.Logic founder*

### Science Award:

Dr. Janet Phoenix, MD, MPH, MS  
*Assistant Research Professor in the Departments of Health Policy and Management in the Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University*

### Policy Award:

Healthy Air Partners Team at American Lung Association  
*including Diana Van Vleet, Laura Kate Bender, Shyamala Rajan, Liz Scott, Natalia Reyes Becerra and Emily Thompson*

### Community Award:

Jacqueline Patterson  
*Founder and Executive Director of the Chisholm Legacy Project: A Resource Hub for Black Frontline Climate Justice Leadership*

### Child Health Advocate Award:

Dr. Jalonne White-Newsome, PhD  
*Visionary leader, public servant, advocate, STEM lover, teacher, entrepreneur, first Federal Chief Environmental Justice Officer at The White House & Proud Momma*

### NOW Youth Leadership Awardee:

Madhvi Chittoor  
*Student, Eco Warrior, and SDG STEAM advocate*



*Awardees at the 2025 celebration*



*Left to right: Artist Khadija Jahmila, with final collaborative collage created by reception guests; CEHN staff setting up for the event; Youth Awardee, Madhvi Chitoor provides a violin performance; Guests gather at the bar at Woodend Sanctuary*

## America the Beautiful for All Coalition

In 2025, the America the Beautiful for All (AtB4A) Coalition proved that when movement infrastructure is sound, justice becomes inevitable. A founding organization, CEHN provides strategic capacity and expertise as the AtB4A builds something unprecedented in the conservation movement: a coalition of coalitions where diverse missions find a singular, collective power.

The AtB4A Coalition convenes 300+ member organizations to ensure that the benefits of nature, healthy environments, and conservation efforts reach every community—especially those historically overburdened by pollution and underinvested in public green spaces.

The coalition unites environmental justice organizations, health advocates, conservation leaders, researchers, Tribal and Indigenous partners, and community groups around a shared vision: protecting 30% of lands and waters in the United States by 2030 (30x30) while advancing equity, access, and environmental justice.

AtB4A drives strategic progress through seven collaborative workgroups (Freshwater, Ocean, Legacy Lands, Public Lands, Urban Parks & Green Space, Wildlife, and Policy, Priorities, and Campaigns). The coalition builds power together using collective advocacy, capacity building, and storytelling as strategy. CEHN's Executive Director serves on the AtB4A Steering Committee, providing visionary oversight that aligns multi-sector goals with the urgent needs of children's health.

Additional CEHN staff serve on the coalition's backbone team, strengthening the movement's core. CEHN representatives manage the coalition's operating system and communications framework—synchronizing 300+ voices into a unified force- and co-manage the coalition's Narrating Change framework, moving the coalition from simply reporting data to coordinating systemic impact.

Collectively, this leadership team ensures CEHN and the coalition remain aligned by managing major campaigns that elevate child-centered environmental justice and conservation priorities, coordinating internal and external communications to ensure clear, consistent messaging regarding children's environmental health, and supporting workgroup leadership to align goals, maintain momentum, and embed children's health considerations throughout coalition strategies.



*America the Beautiful for All Coalition members and backbone team at events and strategy sessions*

## 2025 Impacts and Successes

This year, the coalition set out to prove that protecting nature and public health is not a partisan issue—it is a human issue. The Coalition completed the research phases for Messaging Strategies That Win for Nature, Justice, and Health:

- Phase 1 (Language Analysis): Identified successful framing (Nature as home, family, stewardship) and discovered pitfalls (passive voice and the monetization of nature).
- Phase 2 (Message Testing): Surveyed 1,544 registered voters (including oversamples of Black, Latino, and Indigenous voters) to test proactive frames with diverse audiences.
- Implementation: Launched our Story Directory and began training members on these winning messaging strategies.

## Policy and Advocacy in Action:

- Public Land Defense: Opposed the "Public Land Sell-Off" bill and defended the Endangered Species Act.
- Marine Protection: Secured 2,000+ signatures for a petition opposing deep-sea mining in American Samoa.
- Coalition Coordination: Mobilized a public letter during the government shutdown and provided a comprehensive August Recess Action Toolkit.
- Farm Bill: Actively elevated conservation and equity priorities within Farm Bill discussions.

## Looking Forward to 2026

2026 is about expanding the definition of what a coalition can achieve. We are building the platforms, credentials, and narrative power required to move 30x30 and Justice40 from federal mandates to community realities. To get involved and learn more, visit the coalition [website](#), check out AtB4A resources, or sign up for the newsletter.



*Coalition representatives present at Climate Week 2025*

## National Environmental Network

The National Environmental Network (NEN) is a network of leaders, organizations, and networks working toward a collective vision of a livable future where all can thrive, acting toward racial and environmental justice and equity through collective power and support. NEN specializes in building community for leaders of environmental organizations and creating cross-sector support.



The Network is made up of around 100 Executive Directors, Principals, CEOs, and other leadership representatives from environmentally-related organizations. This includes community-based, legacy, Tribal, public health, and faith-based organizations, plus those in between. CEHN's Executive Director is a member of the NEN Steering Committee. This committee is made up of leaders dedicated to equity, trust, and relationship building within the environmental movement.

In 2025, additional CEHN staff provided backbone support for NEN, including administration and facilitation of virtual monthly meetings. Especially during times of change, these gatherings have remained safe spaces for movement building, resource sharing, and support for environmental leaders. Meetings have featured “boots-on-the-ground” speakers as well as high level talks from environmental leaders, and constructive open dialogue. Throughout the meetings, facilitators are intentionally weaving in healing, solidarity and grounding elements.

CEHN staff also led a series of in-depth individual interviews with Network members this fall, working to identify key needs and identify Network gaps in these critical times.

## Childhood Cancer Prevention

Over the past year, the Children's Environmental Health Network has continued to strengthen national efforts to prevent childhood cancer by elevating awareness, expanding education, and supporting key partners dedicated to protecting children from environmental health risks. CEHN's work is grounded in a core truth: prevention is essential. While treatment remains critical, reducing harmful environmental exposures before they occur offers the greatest potential to lower cancer risk, lessen lifelong health burdens, and create healthier communities for future generations.



Children are especially vulnerable to environmental hazards due to their rapid growth, developing organ systems, and behaviors that increase their contact with contaminants in air, water, soil, and consumer products. Their bodies absorb toxins more readily, and exposures during sensitive windows of development can lead to greater harm than the same exposures later in life. These factors make proactive, evidence-based prevention strategies not only beneficial, but urgent.

## Childhood Cancer & the Environment PEHSU Partnership

CEHN provided ongoing support to the Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units (PEHSU) Childhood Cancer and the Environment Program, enhancing both program capacity and communications outreach. This included developing and disseminating media materials, strengthening public messaging on environmental exposures, and amplifying the expertise of PEHSU professionals whose guidance is essential to prevention efforts.

To ensure that new research, policy updates, and educational resources reach broad and diverse audiences, CEHN helps to facilitate the Childhood Cancer and the Environment newsletter, a vital channel for sharing emerging science, prevention strategies, and stories from the field.



*Sunrise over Texas Children's Hospital*

## Childhood Cancer Prevention Consortium

In February 2025, CEHN co-hosted the second Childhood Cancer Prevention Symposium at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, Texas with PREP4Gold Childhood Cancer Organization. This exciting event brought together experts, researchers, and advocates to discuss the latest advancements and strategies in preventing childhood cancer. With a focus on prevention, the Symposium aimed to raise awareness and promote collaboration in the fight against this devastating disease.



*Speakers at the 2025 Symposium*

The new Childhood Cancer Prevention Consortium is a natural evolution of the Symposium series and its network of researchers, clinicians, advocates, and families committed to advancing prevention-focused solutions. The Consortium is a large-scale collaborative initiative, uniting childhood cancer and child health organizations under the guidance of leading scientific, advocacy, and funding experts.

The effort is dedicated to addressing childhood cancer prevention by creating a comprehensive, actionable strategy with clear, measurable, and impactful timelines. The Consortium's official launch was announced in September. CEHN leads the policy and advocacy work for the consortium, with engagement from the Cancer-Free-Economy Network.

## Workforce Development & Mentorship

This year, CEHN expanded and strengthened its workforce development initiatives; an essential investment in the future of children’s environmental health. By cultivating new leaders, supporting early-career professionals, and facilitating cross-sector collaboration, we are building a more capable, connected, and equity-centered field.

### Monthly Networking Calls

This year, CEHN launched monthly workforce networking calls, creating a dedicated space for students, early-career professionals, and seasoned experts to connect. These calls foster mentorship, share career pathways, spark collaboration, and help build a more inclusive pipeline into the field.

By strengthening community and reducing barriers to professional support, these gatherings help ensure that more diverse voices and perspectives shape the future of children’s environmental health. Together, our staff, interns, fellows, and partners are building a dynamic and growing workforce ready to protect children’s health today and for generations to come.

### CEHN Fellowships

CEHN continues to serve as a hub for innovative fellowship opportunities that cultivate the next generation of environmental health experts.

#### *Children’s Environmental Health and Healthy Housing Fellowship*

Through our partnership with the National Center for Healthy Housing, fellows developed powerful, community-responsive projects focused on housing quality and its direct impacts on children’s health. Their work advanced practical, solutions-oriented strategies to improve home environments and reduce health disparities.

#### *International Society for Children’s Health and the Environment Research to Action Fellowship:*

CEHN is currently hosting fellows from the International Society for Children’s Health Research and the Environment (ISCHE). This project focuses on climate storytelling from the frontlines—an essential tool for translating science, elevating community voices, and driving policy change. Fellows’ creative approaches help broaden public understanding of children’s environmental health challenges worldwide and train community leaders in science communication. This fellowship began in September 2025 and will continue through January 2027.

### CEHN Internships

CEHN was excited to host several talented and passionate cohorts of interns in the past year.

CEHN’s work was enriched by:

- Communications, Marketing, and Design Interns
- Carol Strobel Policy & Health Education Interns
- Eco-Healthy Child Care® Interns
- Children’s Environmental Health Research and Translation (CEHRT) Interns
- CEHN Summer Interns



CEHN staff and summer interns gathered in DC

These students help design outreach tools, launch initiatives, build community, increase organizational capacity, and plan key events. Our interns contributed to research, communications, program planning, and community engagement efforts, each helping advance CEHN's mission while gaining hands-on experience in the children's environmental health field.

### **Thoughts from CEHN Interns**

*"My internship at CEHN exceeded every expectation I had. I was encouraged to try my hand at a wide variety of projects and can say with certainty this experience has strengthened my skills. I felt that my work was meaningful and actively contributed to the positive impact that CEHN has."*

*"My experience as an EHCC program intern was filled with many gratifying learning opportunities. It not only deepened my knowledge and understanding of environmental health, but it also allowed me to apply this knowledge to the service of children's needs. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to be part of a community so beautifully dedicated in its mission to protect and promote healthy environments for children."*

### **CEHN Volunteers**

CEHN is fortunate that a cadre of passionate volunteers helps support our work. Our volunteers are most often students and young professionals, who are excited to get involved with a cause they care about. They assist with events and other tasks that help expand CEHN staff capacity.

We appreciate our volunteers- thanks for all your help!

## **Additional network News**

### **New staff**

CEHN was excited to welcome several new staff members to the team in 2025:

- Haleemah Atobiloye- Program and Communications Strategist
- Kristen Herbert- Senior Advisor, Advancement
- Rebecca Barry- Consultant



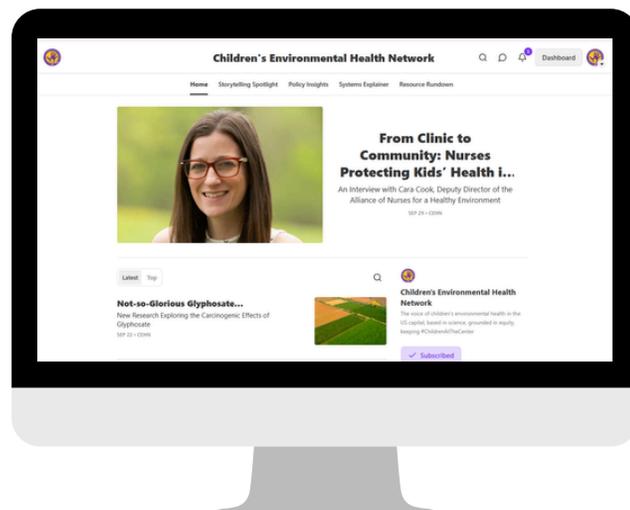
*CEHN staff, intern Sadie Yoder, and partner Blean Girma at the spring staff outing*



*CEHN staff at the 2025 Awards celebration*

## Substack

In 2025, CEHN launched a Substack. This account is a place for environmental and public health professionals, child care providers, children’s health advocates, and caregivers to learn and follow CEHN on a deeper dive within some of the organization’s priority areas. While CEHN’s social media is aimed more towards immediate and infographic material, this is a place to spend an extra few minutes breaking down the ‘who,’ ‘what,’ and ‘why’ in the children’s environmental health field.



## Emerging Threats

As environmental health risks evolve, Children’s Environmental Health Network continues to elevate emerging threats that pose growing risks to children’s health and well-being. Two areas of increasing concern—plastic pollution and the rapid expansion of data centers—highlight how modern systems and technologies can create new, often overlooked exposures for children.

Plastics are now ubiquitous in children’s environments, from food packaging and toys to medical devices and school supplies. These materials can contain and release harmful chemicals, including endocrine disruptors, that are linked to developmental, reproductive, and immune health effects.

At the same time, the rapid growth of data centers—driven by cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and digital infrastructure—raises emerging environmental justice and public health concerns, especially as large tech companies work without proper oversight or community input. Data centers are energy- and water-intensive and are often sited near communities already

burdened by pollution. Associated power generation, diesel backup systems, water use, and heat emissions can degrade air and water quality, with potential impacts on nearby schools, child care settings, and homes.

CEHN is monitoring these expanding sectors to ensure children’s health considerations are integrated into planning, evaluation, and regulatory decisions, and to advocate for cleaner, more equitable infrastructure solutions and a less toxic economy. Looking forward, CEHN will continue to respond to emerging threats like plastics and data centers, ensuring children’s health remains visible, protected, and prioritized in a rapidly changing environmental landscape.



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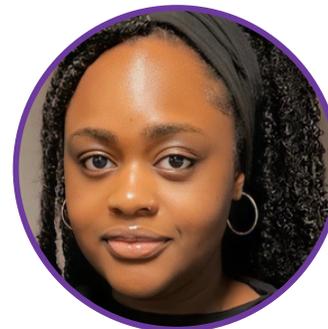
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*Consultant*

## Interns & Fellows

### Spring 2025

Sadie Yoder  
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Rebecca Barry  
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Kirthana Krishnamurthy  
*Children's Environmental Health Research Translation (CEHRT) Intern*

### Summer 2025

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*Children's Environmental Health and Healthy Housing Fellow*

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*Children's Environmental Health and Healthy Housing Fellow*

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*CEHRT Intern*

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Julia Dickinson  
*Carol Strobel Policy & Health Education Intern*

Will Rome  
*Reilly Policy Intern*

### Fall 2025, cont.

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Will Rome  
*Reilly Policy Intern*

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CEHN thanks the thousands of people who support our programs each year through employee giving and EarthShare@Work. With your help we are continuing to protect the developing child from environmental health hazards and promote a healthier environment for all. Thank you for taking care of what matters to you by giving at work and through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). Learn more about EarthShare at [www.earthshare.org](http://www.earthshare.org)

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Shantha Alonso  
Laura Anderko  
Ekaete Bailey  
Steve Bone  
Elizabeth L Brandt  
Carla Campbell  
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Selin McCurdy  
G Lincoln McCurdy  
Le-Nhung McLeland  
Elise Miller  
Mark Mitchell  
Chrystal Murphy  
Rianna Murray  
Alissa Mwenelupembe  
Thomas Neltner  
Anthony Nicome  
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James and Jennifer Roberts  
Jennifer Roberts  
Sheela Sathyanarayana  
Eric Schaffer  
Liz Scott  
Marlene Senechal  
Andrea Shantz  
Perry Sheffield  
Derek Shendell  
Peggy Shepard  
Sankar Sitaraman  
Adam Spanier  
Lisa Sternfeld  
Jordan Stevens  
Kristie Trousdale & Daniel  
Gruner  
Luke Van de Walle  
Hannah Wilkerson  
Lisa Whipfield  
Julia Wu

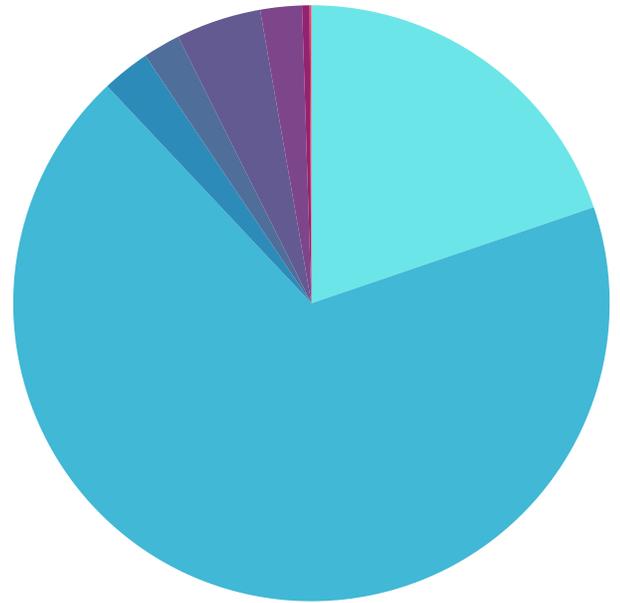


CEHN at the 2025 Staff Retreat

# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

## Income

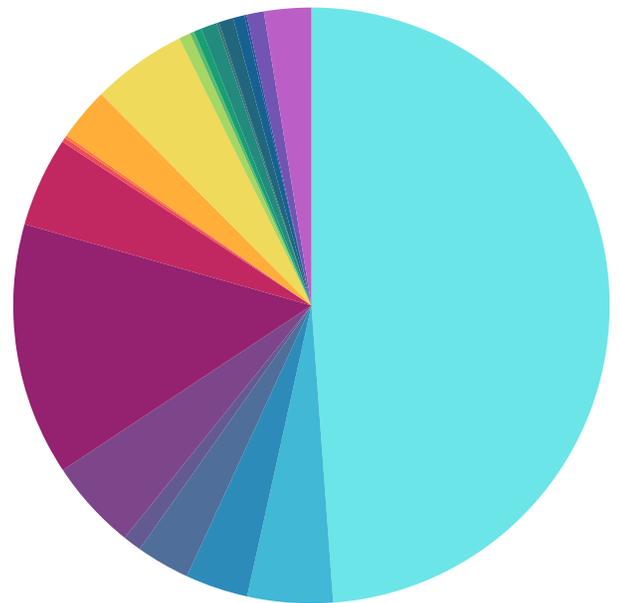
- Federal Grants - \$238,831
- Foundation Grants - \$823,761
- Contributions - \$31,475
- Awards Reception/CEH Day - \$24,483
- Program Fees - \$55,810
- Program Income - \$27,200
- Reimbursed Expenses - \$4,818.08
- Billable Expenses - \$750
- Interest Income - \$498.92



**Total Income = \$1,207,627**

## Expenses

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| ● Personnel Labor - \$596,090             | ● Other Expenses - \$9,569        |
| ● Fringe Benefits - \$56,501              | ● Marketing/Fundraising - \$7,570 |
| ● Payroll Taxes - \$41,423                | ● Partner Support - \$1,430       |
| ● Pension Expenses - \$35,508             | ● Supplies - \$11,502             |
| ● Professional/Consultant Fees - \$12,252 | ● Student Stipends - \$31,203     |
| ● Temp/Contract Labor - \$59,980          |                                   |
| ● Program Expense - \$167,428             |                                   |
| ● Travel - \$59,377                       |                                   |
| ● Insurance - \$3,027                     |                                   |
| ● Postage and Delivery - \$1,871          |                                   |
| ● Equipment - \$35,177                    |                                   |
| ● Rent - \$62,779                         |                                   |
| ● Printing and Reproduction - \$7,693     |                                   |
| ● Meeting Expenses - \$2,777              |                                   |
| ● Communications - \$5,135                |                                   |
| ● Computer/Web Services - \$10,590        |                                   |
| ● Office Supplies - \$1,717               |                                   |



**Total Expenses = \$1,220,599**

**Net Income = \$12,972**

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**CEH E-Digest:** Get a weekly summary of events, funding and employment opportunities, new resources, and happenings from the broader children's environmental health community.

**Patron Policy Newsletters:** A monthly rundown of legislative, administrative, judicial, and regulatory federal policy actions that impact children's environmental health, plus policy calls to action

**Catalyst Newsletters:** Hear the latest in children's environmental health research translation, focusing on the NIEHS-funded CEHRT Collaborative Centers. Includes new research, events, storytelling spotlights, and more.

**Children's Environmental Health Day Newsletters:** This includes both a monthly newsletter and Children's Environmental Health Day-specific announcements. The monthly newsletter covers actionable tips to improve kids' health, book recommendations, and spotlights on CEH Day Partners, as well as events, resources, and updates from Partners.

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Interns and fellows gain experience with leading one or more projects related to children's environmental health, networking with and being mentored by leaders in the field, gaining valuable insight into the role of national nonprofits in public health and the environment.

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### Join a network engagement call

Join CEHN's community online the first Tuesday of each month at 5 pm ET.

[Learn more](#)