

# RFP for Community PFAS Outreach Grant

## 2. Organization info

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### Contact Information

Submitting Organization : East Madison Community Center  
Street Address : 8 Straubel Court  
City : Madison  
County : Dane  
Zip Code : 53704  
Email : rmconnell@eastmadisoncc.org

**Is your organization a Madison-based community group or non-profit with a Federal Tax ID number?**

Yes

**If yes, please list your Federal Tax ID Number**

Federal Tax ID Number : 39-1941839

**If no, please list the name of your fiscal sponsor and their Federal Tax ID Number**

## 3. Application questions

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### Application Details

Name of Project/Program/Initiative : EMCC Community PFAS Awareness Program  
Amount requested : \$10,054  
Anticipated start date : 09/01/23  
Anticipated completion date : 08/31/24

**What does your proposal seek to accomplish? Include a description of your project(s), how funds will be spent, and information about if this is a new initiative/program/activity or if it is supplemental to an ongoing effort. Response limited to 500 words (10 points).**

The EMCC Community PFAS awareness program's primary goals are to:

- Increase awareness of PFAS and other pollutants in the Starkweather Creek/water sources in Madison.
- Conduct outreach to inform neighborhood residents about PFAS dangers and how to safely consume fish from local waters.
- Continue to educate youth through EMCC youth programs on PFAS dangers and presence in the neighborhood and surrounding area.

In 2020, EMCC partnered with the Midwest Environmental Justice Organization (MEJO), to educate youth on the pollutants in the Starkweather Creek, near their homes and where they play. The program was gaining momentum until COVID-19 and has been revived with the current partnership with Public Health Madison and Dane County. EMCC has currently been hosting Environmental Health Specialist, Chee Thao, of Public Health Madison & Dane County, to share PFAS education through the weekly food pantry. The proposed EMCC Community PFAS Awareness Program would take the initiative to the next level and include adults and widespread outreach efforts in nearby neighborhoods.

The program will build upon EMCC's present PFAS awareness efforts. It consists of four main components: Youth education, community outreach, a speaker series and a culminating community event.

- Youth Education: EMCC youth program staff will present PFAS education lessons through the afterschool learning center. Four field trips will be taken to the local water sources, including Starkweather Creek. Water testing, fishing safety and safe food consumption will be emphasized with hands-on education in collaboration with the DNR and Public Health. Educational materials will be sent home with youth program participants.

Funds: Youth program staff, fishing equipment, field trip snacks, hands-on science activities

- Community Outreach: Two of EMCC's primary staff, who work directly with patrons, will develop an outreach plan with surrounding neighborhoods and neighborhood associations. Outreach materials will be disseminated through mailings, flyers, social media posts and handing out flyers to people fishing in nearby water sources. Two outreach workers will be acquired through center outreach with emphasis on the Hmong and Spanish languages. PFAS information magnets will be distributed by the outreach team at events and tabling at EMCC.

Funds: Staff (program coordinator and program assistant), outreach worker stipends, gas cards, translation services, flyers, postage, mobile question spinner for events, PFAS magnets

- Speaker Series: A quarterly speaker series will host content specialists from Public Health Madison & Dane County, Department of Natural Resources and the WI Department of Health Services and Madison Water Utility. The event in February will focus on PFAS and risk of cancer during the National Cancer Prevention Month. Each event will include a meal.

Funds: Speaker stipends, event flyers, magnets, meal and refreshments.

- Culminating Event: Community members in the surrounding eastside neighborhoods will be invited to a community meal with an educational component. The event will showcase the youth program's PFAS awareness projects and include a presentation on safe fish consumption while enjoying a Wisconsin style fish fry. Program partners will be invited to table and provide resources.

Funds: Speaker stipend, flyers, meal and refreshments.

**What experience does your organization have with serving underserved or marginalized communities? Please include the specific communities that you have worked with. Response limited to 100 words. (10 points)**

The East Madison Community Center (EMCC), located within the CDA Truax Housing complex has been serving the low-income neighborhoods on the eastside of Madison for 57 years. The three primary staff have over 100 years of cumulative experience working with marginalized, at-risk populations. Neighborhoods served include Truax, Carpenter-Ridgeway, Darbo, and Webb-Rethke.

**Please describe how the actions and activities you are planning will have an impact. This may include identifying systemic inequities and how your program plans to address or mitigate the impacts of those systems. Responses limited to 250 words (10 points).**

For some community residents, shopping at the grocery store isn't always an option or a main source of food. Lack of transportation, funds, and knowledge of healthful choices hinder a person's ability to make positive choices. Some residents rely on the food pantry, community garden plot and fishing from the closest water source. EMCC addresses these barriers through a weekly food pantry, resources and referrals such as CDA or JFF, and providing programs to give people the tools to make informed decisions for overall health and wellness and self-sufficiency. Providing programs at the neighborhood level reduces barriers so that more residents can access community programs more effectively.

The EMCC Community PFAS Awareness Program brings education to the neighborhood level. Using a multi-generational approach, youth, adults and families will be introduced to PFAS education through a variety of approaches. Language, transportation, and income barriers will be addressed in program development to reach neighborhood residents who may otherwise not be exposed to PFAS education and preventative measures for PFAS ingestion.

Outreach workers will be armed with PFAS resources, basic information and invitations to the EMCC speaker series and activities. The neighborhoods in the EMCC service area will ultimately receive more than one touch with PFAS education materials in their native language.

**Please identify the geographic or identity groups, within Madison, on which your project will focus and how you identified this target audience/population? Responses limited to 250 words (10 points).**

The target population is primarily low-income neighborhoods on the eastside of Madison by the Starkweather Creek. The neighborhoods immediately surrounding the East Madison Community Center are located in close proximity to the Starkweather Creek and is considered high risk for PFAS pollution. The East Madison Community Center regularly conducts outreach to this population through flyers to community organizations, JFF teams, CDA housing complexes, social media and more.

The Department of Health Services (DHS) sent a letter to DNR on October 4, 2019, which assesses the health risks of PFAS in surface waters in the Starkweather Creek area. DHS has made recommendations in order to best protect people and pets from potential PFAS exposure in all surface waters, including Starkweather Creek. Source: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/PFAS/DaneCounty.html>

The East Madison Community Center was identified by MEJO as a collaborative partner due to its proximity to Starkweather Creek and the community education programs already in place at the Center. With the EMCC Community PFAS Awareness Program, outreach and education will continue to the at-risk populations in the Starkweather Creek neighborhoods.

<https://mejo.us/mejo-and-east-madison-community-center-teens-find-significantly-elevated-pfas-levels-in-starkweather-creek-sediments/>

<https://www.northsidenews.org/northside-teens-push-for-creek-clean-up-after-new-sediment-tests-find-high-levels-of-pfas-again/>

<https://mejo.us/capital-city-hues-on-mejo-emcc-starkweather-pfas-testing-part-2/>

<https://mejo.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2022.2.9.Starkweather-Creek-PFAS-Morass-REVISED-1.pdf>  
<https://wisconsinwatch.org/2021/10/starkweather-creek-one-of-wisconsins-most-pfas-polluted-waterways/>

**Please describe your experience working with your target population in past projects. Response limited to 250 words (10 points).**

EMCC is located within the heart of the low-income Truax housing development, with a large African-African and SE Asian demographic. For 57 years, the Center has provided free programs in response community need in collaboration with 100s of community partners. The three primary staff of EMCC have over 100 years of service experience with the EMCC community. Most recently in 2020, EMCC partnered with the Madison Community Foundation in a Census Outreach Program. EMCC developed and executed an outreach program to primarily low-income neighborhoods on the eastside of Madison. Over 100 households were assisted with completing the census, outreach workers were trained and gained computer skills, connections were made with local apartment complex managers and new community members were introduced to EMCC.

EMCC recently took a group of 20 community members to a local grocery store for a bi-lingual tour with a dietician. Residents learned about making better choices at the grocery store and some tricks of the trade to shopping in a more healthful way. The proposed PFAS Awareness Program would build upon this foundation and continue the discussion on making healthful food choices at home.

EMCC staff have been working closely with the community gardeners, many of whom only speak Hmong. The use of an on-demand translation service has opened the door to lively conversations in the garden and interest in language acquisition programs at EMCC. EMCC strives to break down the barriers to work with the community-at-large with emphasis on marginalized populations.

<https://mejo.us/mejo-and-east-madison-community-center-teens-find-significantly-elevated-pfas-levels-in-starkweather-creek-sediments/>

<https://www.northsidenews.org/northside-teens-push-for-creek-clean-up-after-new-sediment-tests-find-high-levels-of-pfas-again/>

<https://mejo.us/capital-city-hues-on-mejo-emcc-starkweather-pfas-testing-part-2/>

<https://mejo.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2022.2.9.Starkweather-Creek-PFAS-Morass-REVISED-1.pdf>

<https://wisconsinwatch.org/2021/10/starkweather-creek-one-of-wisconsins-most-pfas-polluted-waterways/>

#### **4. Thank You!**

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**Thank you for your application. You will be informed of our decision on August 25, 2023.**