



# American Rescue Plan Air Monitoring Implementation Experience

*CAAAC Meeting  
September 13, 2022*

Kristen Benedict  
Ambient Air Monitoring Group Leader  
U.S. EPA Office of Air Quality Planning & Standards

**A**  
for reconciliation pursuant  
Res. 5.  
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of  
Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled  
**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**  
This Act may be cited as the "**American Rescue Plan**

March 2021

4  
**Act of 2021**  
**TABLE OF CONTENTS.**  
Table of contents for this Act is as follows

# American Rescue Plan (ARP)

- EPA received a supplemental FY 2021 appropriation of \$100 million from the ARP to address health outcome disparities from pollution and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- EPA's appropriation was split into two \$50 million line items – one dedicated to support environmental justice (EJ) priorities, and the other dedicated to enhance air quality monitoring



# American Rescue Plan - Announcements

**June 25, 2021**

EPA [announced](#) American Rescue Plan (ARP) to fund environmental justice initiatives.

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**July 7, 2021**

EPA [announced](#) plans for \$50M in ARP funds to improve ambient air quality monitoring for communities across the United States.



<https://www.epa.gov/arp>

# American Rescue Plan - Continued

EPA is making \$50 million in **one-time** American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding available to **enhance ambient air quality monitoring in communities** across the United States.

(<https://www.epa.gov/arp>)

1. Grant Competition for Community Monitoring (\$20M)
  - EPA launched a \$20 million grant competition that called for proposals from nonprofit community-based organizations, state, Tribal and local air agencies -- individually or in partnerships -- to conduct monitoring of pollutants of greatest concern in communities with health outcome disparities.
2. Direct Awards to Air Agencies for Continuous PM<sub>2.5</sub> Monitoring and Other Common Air Pollutants (\$22.5M)
  - EPA is in the process of awarding \$22.5 million to state, Tribal or local air agencies for enhanced monitoring of PM<sub>2.5</sub> and five other air pollutants regulated by the [National Ambient Air Quality Standards under the Clean Air Act](#).
3. Enhanced Regional Capacity for Short-term Community Monitoring Needs (\$5M)
4. Administrative Support (\$2.5M)

# American Rescue Plan - Outreach

- Grant Competition - December 13, 2021, EPA announced the availability of \$20 million in American Rescue Plan funding through competitive grants to enhance ambient air quality monitoring in and near underserved communities across the United States. EPA will award funds to support community and local efforts to monitor air quality and to promote air quality monitoring partnerships between communities and tribal, state, and local governments.
  - Insight and Feedback Sessions – Summer 2021
    - Prior to the announcement, EPA conducted insight and feedback sessions in the summer of 2021 with interested stakeholders to discuss ideas on what the Agency should consider in drafting the solicitation (e.g. identification of the most important needs for ambient air monitoring, regulatory vs. non-regulatory air monitoring, and approaches to empower communities with air monitoring data to help address disproportionate exposures).
  - General Grants Training – September 2021 (<https://www.epa.gov/arp/enhanced-air-quality-monitoring-funding-under-arp>)
    - EPA hosted a general grants training for community organizations, tribes, and air agencies on September 29, 2021 in preparation for the grant competition. The presentation was recorded and posted on EPA's ARP website.
  - Informational Webinar on Request for Applications – January 2022 (<https://www.epa.gov/arp/enhanced-air-quality-monitoring-funding-under-arp>)
    - After the request for applications was announced, EPA hosted an informational webinar about the funding. The presentation was recorded and posted on EPA's ARP website.
  - Based on requests from eligible entities, EPA extended the initial application deadline and closed the grant competition on March 25, 2022.
  - EPA received over 200 applications from across the country. EPA will now begin the review and selection process with awards expected to be made no later than November 2022.
- Direct Awards - In the summer and fall of 2021, EPA engaged state, local, and tribal agencies to better understand air monitoring equipment needs across the existing network for pollutants regulated by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards under the Clean Air Act. EPA Regions are working with state, Tribal, and local air agencies through the grant allocation process to distribute \$22.5 million in direct awards to enhance continuous monitoring of fine particle pollution (PM2.5) across the United States and support replacement of other aging air monitoring equipment.
- Enhanced Regional Capacity - EPA is enhancing regional capacity for short-term community monitoring through \$5 million in total investments to support mobile monitoring labs and air sensor loan programs. Regions are in the process of ordering equipment they identified as needed to address community concerns.

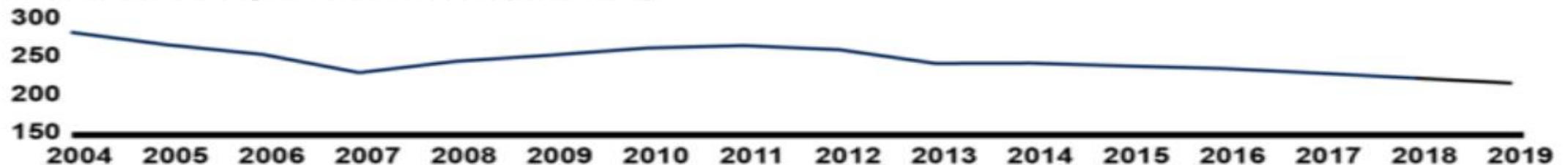
# Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report



- GAO report titled *Air Pollution: Opportunities to Better Sustain and Modernize the National Air Quality Monitoring System* (GAO-21-38)
  - The ambient air quality monitoring system is a national asset that provides standardized information for implementing the Clean Air Act and protecting public health.
  - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state and local agencies cooperatively manage the system, with each playing different roles in design, operation, oversight, and funding. For example, EPA establishes minimum requirements for the system, and state and local agencies operate the monitors and report data to EPA.
  - Challenges identified in both sustaining and modernizing the network

Annual Inflation-Adjusted EPA Funding for State and Local Air Quality Management Grants

Real value fiscal year 2019 dollars (in millions)



Source: GAO analysis of Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, data. | GAO-21-38

# Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report



- **Recommendation 1**

- “...EPA's Office of Air and Radiation, in consultation with state and local agencies, should develop, make public, and implement an asset management framework for consistently sustaining the national ambient air quality monitoring system. Such a framework could be designed for success by considering the key characteristics of effective asset management described in our report, such as identifying the resources needed to sustain the monitoring system, using quality data to manage infrastructure risks, and targeting resources toward assets that provide the greatest value.”

- **Recommendation 2**

- “...EPA's Office of Air and Radiation, in consultation with state and local agencies and other relevant federal agencies, should develop and make public an air quality monitoring modernization plan to better meet the additional information needs of air quality managers, researchers, and the public. Such a plan could address the ongoing challenges in modernizing the national ambient air quality monitoring system by considering leading practices, including establishing priorities and roles, assessing risks to success, identifying the resources needed to achieve goals, and measuring and evaluating progress.”



# Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report



- GAO report titled *Air Pollution: Opportunities to Better Sustain and Modernize the National Air Quality Monitoring System* (GAO-21-38) released November 2020 (<https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-38>)
  - Two key recommendations focused on asset management and modernization.
  - EPA committed to address each recommendation in coming years.
  - Asset management is being addressed first, with modernization to follow.
  - Examples of modernization are not just technology based, and include:
    - Increasing local-scale, real-time air quality data availability
    - Increasing air toxics monitoring capabilities and coverages
    - Addressing persistent and complex pollution (e.g., wildfires)
    - Evaluate increased use of low-cost sensors and satellite data
  - Funding is a key consideration for success.



# Comments, Questions, Feedback