

Envision Program Goal

The goal of the Envision Program is to assist schools in creating and implementing environmental health management plans. We do this by educating schools on environmental health issues, and providing a sustainable means to identify, prevent, and “problem-solve” potential environmental health and indoor air quality (IAQ) issues.

Act 125 calls for a set of minimum guidelines, which include, but are not limited to the following:

Assessment

Determining if environmental health problem(s) or potential problem(s) exist in your school. Prioritizing them with respect to health risk to the general school population, ease of change and cost.

Address

Establishing a plan of action to lessen or remove, to the extent possible, any existing environmental health problems. Create a method to manage health questions, concerns, complaints and incidents as they happen.

Prevention

Implementing strategies to avoid potential environmental health problems by reducing exposure to irritants and chemicals and maintaining and/or repairing equipment or structural issues that could lead to potential environmental health problems.

Promotion/Support

Promoting environmental health awareness through dissemination of information and involvement in environmental health programs. Supporting your environmental health plan by documenting and sharing your success with the school community.

Maintainability

Ensuring that your environmental health program is sustained by keeping documentation of all implemented and proposed plans and resolutions accessible to the public and by creating a means to review and update your program on a yearly basis. Participation in Envision also will enable schools to utilize existing related programs to help create a comprehensive School Environmental Health Management Plan.

Program Enrollment and Participation

Enrollment into the Envision program is voluntary. The legislation does not impose new mandates on schools.

The Envision program provides the following:

- A model Environmental Health Management Plan
- A model Environmental Health Policy
- Samples of four model procedures on: Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning, Integrated Pest Management, Purchasing of Least/Non-Hazardous Products, and Construction/Renovation
- A resource guide including information on environmental health issues and contacts
- Training session and workshop opportunities on environmental health issues and US EPA's Tools for Schools
- Technical support network
- A mentor school to assist in the implementation of your environmental health management plan
- Eligibility for the Envision – Certificate of Achievement for Environmental Health in Schools from the commissioners of Health, Education, and Building & General Services for the progress and improvement made in creating a healthier school environment.
 - The certificate is awarded to schools who complete the implementation of the environmental health management plan, provide documentation, and show commitment to sustainability via the adoption of various environmental health policies and procedures

Core Standards of the Envision Program

The Envision Program was designed so schools could successfully bring about improvements and progress in their goal towards creating and maintaining a healthier school environment. The first step is to identify members that will belong to the environmental health and safety committee. Members should include an administrator, nurse, buildings or facilities worker, teacher, parent and student.

A school or school district becomes an Envision Partner when the core standards of the Envision Program are completed. The core standards include:

- Adopting an environmental health management policy and plan;
- Adopting purchasing policies that specify nontoxic or least toxic materials;
- Adopting an integrated pest management and control program to reduce pesticide exposure in and around the school and;
- Completing an annual school environmental health workshop approved by the Health Department

A school or district can further demonstrate exemplary progress in improving environmental health and IAQ by progressing in four environmental health areas.

These environmental health areas include:

- Replacing several products with least toxic or non-toxic products;
- Replacing pesticide used in and around the school with integrated pest management steps that reduce pesticide exposures;
- Using environmental health management practices to reduce exposure to hazardous materials;
- Reducing exposures to environmental triggers to decrease the severity of asthma or allergy reactions at the school;
- Implementing healthy cleaning and grounds-keeping measures;
- Radon testing and remediation, if necessary;
- Involving students in the environmental health management plan efforts through special events, clubs, or classroom activities;
- Mentoring other schools in the district and;
- Addressing other school environmental priorities.

Progress in these areas makes the school or district eligible for the Envision Certificate of Achievement under the School Environmental Health Act 125. Any projects or programs a school is already involved in can be integrated into the Envision Program, subject to approval from the Health Department.

Roles and Responsibilities

It will take the combined efforts of many people to implement and maintain a successful environmental health management plan and program. The following is a brief outline of the general roles and responsibilities of the people involved.

Health Department:

- Hold and/or identify workshops for schools
- Provide technical support regarding environmental and/or IAQ issues
- Point of contact for resources and information

School's Environmental Health Committee

- Research and develop plans and policies
- Maintain documentation
- Make recommendations to the administration

School Administration

- Implement Environmental Health Committee recommendations
- Delegate authority to implement recommendations
- Adopt procedures recommended by the Environmental Health committee

School Board

- Adopt policies recommended by the School Administration and/ or Environmental Health Committee

Tools for Implementing Your School Environmental Health Management Plan

Act 125 and the model environmental health management plan were created utilizing the [US EPA's IAQ Tools for Schools action kit](#) as its foundation. Therefore, most of the minimum guidelines called out by Act 125 already have a "tool" (e.g. pre-made checklists, model policies, memos, and letters) in the IAQ Tools for Schools action kit that can be used and/or modified as needed.

It is recommended that schools take advantage of the action kit to help them get started. There is a great deal of useful information on environmental health topics, pre-made checklists, suggestions, and sources of information. If your school does not have an IAQ Tools for Schools action kit or would like the latest version, please contact the Health Department for information on how to obtain a copy.

Contact Information

Health Department contact information:

Phone: 800-439-8550

Email: envision@vermont.gov

Website: healthvermont.gov/environment/school

You may also call the **Environmental Protection Agency Region 1 Customer Call Center** at 888-372-7341.

Schools may incorporate or combine existing programs and associated information with IAQ Tools for Schools.