

Responses to Questions on the Solicitation for Cumulative Health Impacts from Air Pollution in California

(Funding Year 2026-2027 Proposal Solicitation)

This document covers questions on the research solicitation on cumulative health impacts from air pollution. Please refer to the [general FAQ](#) (also available through [CARB Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Research Project Solicitation](#)) for questions on proposal selection, budget and contracting, pre-proposal requirements, and the use of generative artificial intelligence.

General Questions

1. What is cumulative impacts?

The California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) defines cumulative impacts as the totality of exposures or effects on public health or the environment resulting from all emissions or discharges in an area. For this research, CARB will focus specifically on the combined effects of exposure to multiple air pollution.

2. Why is CARB studying cumulative impacts?

People are continuously exposed to multiple air pollutants and other environmental stressors. Multiple community groups, academic researchers, and state and local agencies identified cumulative impacts as an important research need during the development of [CARB's Five-Year Strategic Research Plan](#). This research will help CARB better understand how combined exposures related to air pollution may affect public health in California.

3. Why does the project have two pillars?

Cumulative impacts is a broad topic. The two pillars address different but complementary research needs:

1. Pillar I will inform CARB's statewide health impact analyses by developing methods that can quantify exposure to multiple criteria air pollutants and assess their combined health effects.
2. Pillar II will focus on community-scale health assessments of toxic air contaminants and other air pollutants of high concern.

4. Can our research team apply for only one pillar?

At this time, we are expecting one research team to conduct both pillars at the same time.

5. Can the PI for the project be non-UC/CSU-employed?

For Research Division solicitations, the principal investigator must be a researcher affiliated with the University of California (UC) or California State University (CSU) system. Individuals outside the UC/CSU system may participate as co-investigators, consultants, or subcontractors for relevant tasks.

Pillar I Questions

6. What is the goal of Pillar I?

Pillar I will develop California-specific health impact functions for exposure to multiple criteria air pollutants. CARB's current regulatory health analyses primarily consider health effects associated with PM_{2.5}; however, people are exposed to a mixture of pollutants. Pillar I will inform CARB's future analyses by providing multipollutant estimates that better represent real-world exposures and associated health effects.

7. What health endpoints will be focused on?

For Pillar I, CARB is seeking health impact functions for mortality, as well as emergency room visits and hospitalizations related to cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses. The researchers may also include additional endpoints if those data are available.

[Pillar II Questions](#)

8. What is the goal of Pillar II?

Pillar II is intended to support health assessments in overburdened communities where toxic air contaminant monitoring has been completed but associated health impacts remain understudied. This Pillar will include 2-3 community-scale health assessments evaluating exposure to one or more air toxics by leveraging existing modeled or observational datasets. The assessments may incorporate a mixed methods approach that combines quantitative and qualitative analyses.

9. How will communities be selected for Pillar II?

Investigators will propose 2-3 communities as part of their preproposal. As part of the scope of work in the solicitation, CARB has provided criteria for community selection and scoring. CARB will review all components of the pre-proposals, including the proposed communities, based on those criteria in the solicitation. As discussed in the solicitation, this contract will not support new monitoring deployment or redeployment of monitoring equipment.