



Safer Together receives Grant from the California Air Resources Board

Funding will expand Safer Air deeper into San Francisco's Southeast Neighborhoods

San Francisco, CA – Safer Together has been selected by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to receive a two-year grant through the Office of Community Air Protection (OCAP) Community Air Grant Program. This funding will support the Safer Air program, an initiative to provide clean air resources, education, and leadership development across the Bayview, Hunters Point, Candlestick Point, Tenderloin, and South of Market neighborhoods of San Francisco.

Safer Air is a community-driven response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on respiratory health in San Francisco's most underserved communities. The program provides community members with training and supplies to build and deploy air filtration devices known as Corsi-Rosenthal Boxes, while simultaneously providing education on how to interpret outdoor air quality, indoor CO₂, and PM levels. Through this latest grant, Safer Together will work alongside multiple partners, including IQAir, United Playaz, and Third Street Youth Clinic, to expand the Safer Air program in San Francisco's Southeast neighborhoods and develop youth-led organizing around community air monitoring, indoor air quality, and Corsi-Rosenthal box usage.

"We are thrilled at the opportunity to take Safer Air to deeper levels of impact," shared Vinny Eng, Safer Together's Director of Policy, Advocacy, and Community Organizing. "The links between neighborhood demographics, pollution rates, and rates of respiratory illness are no coincidence. Safer Air was created so that communities can lead their own movement toward better air quality, long-term improved health outcomes, and greater emergency preparedness."

San Francisco's Southeast neighborhoods provide an urgent case of environmental racism. The Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities who represent the majority populations of these areas are overrepresented in a number of indicators of poor respiratory health, including COVID-19 case rates, asthma diagnoses, and emergency room visits caused by chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Homes often expose communities to lead or mold in built environments and are in mixed use corridors with poor air quality due to their proximity to highways and industrial activity. In addition to being identified in the California Climate Investment Priority Population Map, these neighborhoods also have the highest measures of cumulative risk of vascular disease, social vulnerability and environmental justice index risk factors as calculated by the Center for Disease Control.



Safer Air was conceptualized in acknowledgment of these statistics and informed by the health experiences community members shared with our field staff as COVID-19 transitioned out of the Omicron wave. Its design combines the free construction and distribution of Corsi-Rosenthal Boxes with community organizing efforts centered on clean air, so that community members can make informed decisions about their health and safeguard their loved ones from the impacts of climate change, pollution, and any other consequence of our constantly shifting landscape.

“We’re humbled by the community response thus far and hopeful for what this latest stream of support means for us.” noted Mariana Fraga, Safer Together’s co-Founder and co-Executive Director. “Clean and breathable air should be a given, not a privilege. We’re working relentlessly to make that a reality.”

About Safer Together:

Safer Together is a 501(c)(3) organization and CLIA-waived lab committed to dismantling barriers to wellbeing for San Francisco’s most underserved communities. Our organization was formed in 2020 in response to the impact of COVID-19 on low-income and BIPOC communities in San Francisco, and has worked since then to build a robust community care infrastructure intentionally outside of clinical settings. To do this we hire directly from the communities we serve and collaborate with over thirty partners to mobilize resources, share knowledge, and build new leaders. We work toward a world free from racism, where everyone has access to quality care.

About the California Air Resources Board (CARB):

CARB is charged with protecting the public from the harmful effects of air pollution and developing programs and actions to fight climate change. From requirements for clean cars and fuels to adopting innovative solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, California has pioneered a range of effective approaches that have set the standard for effective air and climate programs for the nation, and the world.

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