

# Air Quality Health Monitoring Task Force (AQHMTF) Meeting Notes

Thursday, May 21, 2026

9:30 AM – 11:00 AM

AQHMTF Meeting Attendees – May 2026		
Name	Title	Organization
Analisa Garcia	Air Quality Planner	NCTCOG
Ashley Wasson, MSN	RN-Asthma Care Coordinator	Children's Health
Barry Lachman		Dallas City Environmental Commission District/Lachman Community Development and Consulting
Cindy Mendez	Director of Public Health and Environmental Quality	City of Grand Prairie
Daniela Tower	Air Quality Planner	NCTCOG
Ebrahim Eslami	Principal Planner	H-GAC
Freddie Ortiz	Environmental Coordinator	City of Dallas, Office of Environmental Sustainability
Heather Bertero	Team Lead, Texas Asthma Control Program	Texas Department of State Health Services
Jenny Narvaez	Program Manager	NCTCOG
Jeremy Johnson	Research Associate	Texas A&M Transportation Institute
Kaitlynn Mather	Conservation Program Coordinator	City of Denton
Kris Yowtak	Air Quality Planner	NCTCOG
Leslie Allsopp	Assistant Professor	UNT Health, Tarrant Area Asthma 411 Consortium, NCT Asthma Coalition
Maritza Figy	Environmental Coordinator	City of Dallas, Office of Environmental Sustainability
Mary Abercrombie	Outreach & Engagement Coordinator	City of McKinney, Office of Environmental Sustainability
Michelle McKenzie	Air Quality Program Manager	Hood County Clean Air Coalition
Savannah Mauter	Sr. Sustainability Coordinator	City of Plano
Shade Afolabi, MD	Associate Professor	UT Southwestern
Tatjana Walker	Executive Director	Marilyn Brachman Hoffman Foundation
Teresa Daniel	Dallas County Commissioner	Dallas County
Tiani Jones	Asthma Control Partnership and Outreach Coordinator	Texas Department of State Health Services
Vivek Thimmavajjhala	Senior Transportation System Modeler	NCTCOG
Woldu Ameneshoa	Assistant Director of Chronic Disease Prevention	Dallas County Health and Human Services
Yunyao Li	Assistant Professor	UTA

**Item 1: North Texas Zero Emission Vehicles (NTxZEV) Call for Projects – Kris Yowtak, NCTCOG**

- A \$60 million award from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles Grant was awarded to NCTCOG with the purpose of incentivizing the deployment of Class 6 and 7 heavy-duty Zero-Emissions Vehicles (battery electric or hydrogen fuel cell electric).
- Public and private fleets are eligible for funding given they adopt a policy consistent with the Regional Transportation Council's (RTC) Clean Fleet Policy.
- Funding is limited by cost share percentage or dollar funding cap, whichever is lower.
- The Call for Projects deadline is a rolling deadline for the third Friday of every month at 5PM until funds are exhausted. Deadline for all project reimbursement requests is October 29, 2027.
- Information on project requirements, selection criteria, and applicant resources can be found in the meeting presentation.
- For questions or to request additional information, please contact Kris Yowtak ([kyowtak@nctcog.org](mailto:kyowtak@nctcog.org)).

**Item 2: Clean Air Act: Section 185 – Daniela Tower, NCTCOG**

- The Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex is in Severe Nonattainment for the 2008 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) of 75 parts per billion (ppb).
- A design value is calculated using air quality measurements from the 2024-2026 ozone season and used to determine if the region will fail to meet the 2008 ozone NAAQS and potentially move into Extreme Nonattainment.
- The design value for the region as of May 21, 2026, is 79 ppb at the Fort Worth Northwest regulatory air monitor, putting the region above the 2008 Ozone NAAQS.
- The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has submitted a Section 185 equivalent program and provided a tentative timeline for the implementation of Section 185 fees for the region. Please refer to the meeting presentation for details.

### Item 3: Air Quality Health Monitoring Task Force: Next Steps – Analisa Garcia, NCTCOG

- Analisa presented the idea of creating educational workshops for different audiences that discuss air quality and health. The following workshop ideas were presented:
  - Air Quality 101/102 Workshops – For the public and professionals new to air quality to learn about beginner and intermediate air quality topics.
  - Health Professionals + Teachers/Caretakers Workshops - To provide relevant and actionable air quality information to professionals working with sensitive populations to confidently discuss air quality and health and effectively prepare for poor air quality events.
  - Air Quality Monitoring Workshop – To provide an interactive space for individuals to learn the basics of air quality monitoring and provide a forum for exchange.
    - AQ Monitoring Peer Learning Group – part of regional AQ monitoring efforts, this peer-learning group would allow for those who have established, or in the process of establishing, their own monitoring network in the region to learn from each other by sharing monitoring experiences, lessons learned, and providing support.
  - Air Quality 201 Workshop - To provide a space for air quality and health professionals to learn and converse about more in-depth air quality and health topics.
- The Task Force was asked to provide feedback on the workshop ideas. The following suggestions were provided:
  - Members inquired about making recordings of the workshops available for future viewing. D. Tower and J. Narvaez noted that while there are benefits to providing recordings, having live, in-person workshops would allow participants to ask questions and share their personal air quality experiences.
  - S. Afolabi noted the current Air Quality 101/102 audience may be too broad and suggested tailoring the workshops to varying audiences. Members highlighted healthcare workers, school faculty (coaches, trainers, teachers), parents/guardians, and air quality professionals as potential audience groups. This would ensure relevancy and applicability of the air quality and health information.
  - Members suggested adding the following topics to the AQ 101/102 curriculum:
    - What individuals can do to improve air quality and reduce their exposure.
    - Information on the health impact on our region with data to support.
    - Indoor vs. outdoor air quality.

- T. Jones shared the Marilyn Brachman Hoffman Foundation is in a funding partnership with the American Lung Association. Over the last 3 years, these two organizations surveyed health professionals for their knowledge and their thoughts on the relevance of indoor air pollution to create evidence-based tools for clinicians, which could be potential information sources for this group.
- L. Allsopp suggested the creation of surveys or other types of data-gathering systems to determine who is participating in the workshop(s) and what information they found most useful.
- Members suggested bringing in additional partners/groups that could be educated and then can go on to share air quality + health information. Additional partners include city coordinators and educators, weather forecasting networks, local meteorology chapters, UTSW public health students, medical students, and attendees.
- W. Ameneshoa noted one of the challenges for Dallas County Health and Human Services is their air quality educational material is too technical. Suggested generating air quality educational materials that are less technical and more focused on health to be shared by health departments.
- C. Mendez noted that educational material that includes the health aspect allows audiences to better determine how poor air quality impacts them and why they should care.
- J. Narvaez noted that NCTCOG is looking to the Task Force members to help identify opportunities to make contact with multiple communities/large audiences since NCTCOG staff availability is limited. Workshops could be held during evening hours to better serve specific communities.
- Y. Li suggested connecting with audiences via social media (Instagram and TikTok) to share air quality and health information. She proposed utilizing her students to help in this effort. Air North Texas could also assist.
- For the AQ Monitoring group, there is a potential to bring in speakers from either in or outside the region to speak about their air quality monitoring experience.
- Group expressed interest in pursuing the Air Quality 201 workshop, which would highlight more technical air quality + health topics.
- The Task Force was asked if there were any improvements to the NCTCOG air quality websites to make them more useful.

- Suggestion to model after TakeCareofTexas.com use of adding resources to specific categories.
- L. Allsopp suggested continually highlighting websites to bring awareness as resources at workshops and seminars.
- Task Force looked at the Oregon Health Authority’s Air Quality and Health Dashboard in relation to a similar dashboard for the North Central Texas Region.
  - Resources shared by H. Bertero, TX DSHS:
    - TX Syndromic Surveillance - <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/texas-syndromic-surveillance-txs2>
    - “Tarrant County Public Health and Houston Health Department host regional syndromic surveillance systems covering PHR 2/3 and PHR 6/5S, respectively, which then feed into the statewide syndromic surveillance system, TxS2. DSHS staff in both the regional offices and at headquarters maintain a collaboration with these partners for syndromic surveillance activities, including collecting and sharing data and information, to ensure the success of the statewide system as a whole.”
    - TX DSHS Impact of Asthma in Texas Report. Syndromic Surveillance located on page 23: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/CHI-Asthma/Docs/Reports/impact-of-asthma-in-texas-2026-report.pdf>
  - S. Afolabi suggested potentially reaching out to Oregon Health Authority to gather information on the creation and maintenance of their dashboard.

**Item 4: Announcements and Updates**

- Y. Li shared her and her team at UTA are currently conducting research on air quality in the DFW region. They are looking for approximately 40 volunteers to host PurpleAir Flex air quality sensors. If you or someone you know is interested in participating, please reach out to her at [Yunyao.li@uta.edu](mailto:Yunyao.li@uta.edu).
- S. Afolabi shared that a UTSW student is looking for a community advisor, preferably in the public health space. If you, or someone you know, is interested in assisting or learning more, please contact S. Afolabi at [Folashade.Afolabi@UTSouthwestern.edu](mailto:Folashade.Afolabi@UTSouthwestern.edu).

**Action Items:**

Analisa will be sending a form to Task Force members to sign up for workshop subcommittees and to provide additional feedback.

**Next meeting:**

TBD

No official meeting next quarter is being planned at this time as the Task Force transitions to subcommittee meetings to begin workshop planning.