Robert Hendrickson

After reviewing the [EPA's guidebook](#) for setting up and maintaining an [air monitoring network](#), can your organization easily follow these guidelines?
Other (please specify)

I do not represent an organization but rather am a potential collaborator that works with data processing, accessibility, and interpretation.

What barriers do you see in undertaking this project?
Overall technical expertise

Data collection and documentation

Site logistics

Other (please specify)

Based on the City of Minneapolis' Community air monitoring project, on top of the complexities of maintaining sensors a big barrier is having sufficient capacity to analyze the data and, most importantly, making the information available to the public in an expedient and actionable fashion as a tool for managing air quality risks in real-time.

In addition to covering the cost of the sensors and their maintenance, how would you use the grant funding?
Staffing to maintain the sensors

Data collection and sharing

Other (please specify)

I think it is important to adequately train and fund as many community members/citizen scientists as possible well as youth and student workers. Childcare and food at training and/or community events. Also funding for a virtual machine to conduct real-time data pulls, perform QAQC, and host a database and dashboard.

How should the MPCA consider an applicant's approach to community outreach and engagement during the grant application process?

Community outreach and engagement to me involves:

~ Having a defined workflow for translating all materials into relevant languages that occurs early on in the creation of any outward facing material.
~ Explicitly setting aside ample money to pay people/youth from the community. An organization can use money to provide training and support to community members but getting money into the hands of people most affected by poor air quality should be highly weighted. Some volunteering is necessary but not so much to where it's exploitative
~ Having a regular email newsletter and online forum for discussion
~ Partnering with local schools and grassroot organizations!
~ Host and attend as many public meetings as possible in a variety of online and in-person locations.
~ Be thoughtful about meeting times of own events - parents won't have the same availability as a college student as a grandparent as a...
~ Formatting a majority of public meetings such that they are more of a workshop/discussion (collaborative) and less of a lecture
~ In person meetings should not be dependent on attendees having access to a mobile device (printed handouts, whiteboards, sticky notes, supplied devices, etc.).
~ If relevant, some public meetings should be conducted in Spanish/Somali/Hmong with an english translator present instead of the other way around.
~ Designate notetakers for every hosted meeting. Virtually archive these notes and make them public
~ Occasionally, sending out snail-mail is important. Door-knocking is even better!

What other information should the MPCA consider during the community air monitoring grant process?

Historically, there are a number of examples where air monitoring has failed. One such example is described in this article:

https://www.propublica.org/article/air-monitors-alone-wont-save-communities-from-toxic-industrial-air-pollution

We should consider what the purpose is of community air monitoring. At the end of the day, monitoring does not fix underlying issues and health impacts. This information must be used to create expedient and meaningful change, even if that leads to having really tough conversations and potentially advocating for severe mitigation or removal of various sources in an area.

Lastly, let us not forget that all this data cannot and should not replace lived experiences. Community air monitoring data should never be used to invalidate what is said by a community - there are too many biotic and abiotic factors to make such claims. It is merely a tool to help us understand and protect ourselves.