

## ARCHS & the U.S. EPA



ARCHS (Area Resources for Community & Human Services) is a strategic funding management organization serving Greater St. Louis at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. Our drinking water is drawn from these two rivers -- and awarded “Best Tasting City Water in America” in 2007 by the U.S. Conference of Mayors. ARCHS partners with the U.S. EPA to help our water be the highest possible quality, too.

ARCHS and its partners are actively engaged with the U.S. EPA both nationally and in Region 7 via environmental justice and demonstration projects. From 2003 to the present, ARCHS has received \$508,545 in EPA funding to create and implement models for working with low-income audiences in urban settings. The resulting partnerships are increasing minority and senior participation in environmental/green-focused activities, e.g., household hazardous waste and medication collection events in urban core neighborhoods.

Through a U.S. EPA *Aging Initiative* grant, ARCHS created the public/private partnership *Regional eXcess Medication Disposal Service (RxMEDS)*. The project won two national awards by achieving these goals:

- to have a family-owned community supermarket/pharmacy chain serve as 20 collection sites for unwanted medications over a five-county area in two states
- to demonstrate an efficient urban/suburban model that properly removes and disposes of unwanted medications
- to inform residents, both children and seniors, of related health and environmental issues.

In 2008 during a 12-month period 296,650 doses of medications were returned by nearly 900 residents. Plastic bottles were shredded for recycling locally. Drugs were incinerated by a local licensed hazardous waste disposal company. Approximately 400 elementary school students and their teachers, and more than 3,000 older adults were educated in poison/drug abuse prevention and disposal alternatives to flushing down the toilet or drain.

Learn more: <http://www.stlarchs.org/rxmeds.htm>

Final report: <http://www.epa.gov/aging/grants/winners/archs.htm>

Through a U.S. EPA *Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem Solving* grant, ARCHS created the public/private partnership *St. Louis Area Communities Addressing Toxics (SLACAT)*:

- to identify community-based solutions for problems associated with small quantities of typical household hazardous waste (HHW), e.g., paint, weed killers, and medications
- to educate residents on the use of less toxic alternatives, and proper handling and disposal practices
- to collaborate with small businesses in adopting voluntary environmental friendly practices.

In the spring of 2009 and 2010, 8.3 tons of HHW were collected at two events from nearly 200 families residing in environmental justice neighborhoods with limited access to proper disposal services. Hundreds of residents and dozens of small businesses learned alternative environmental friendly behaviors, including how to make a safe household cleaner. More than 3,000 “go green” multi-media toolkits were distributed in the community.

Learn more: <http://www.stlarchs.org/about/history/35-case-studies.html>

Videos: <http://www.youtube.com/stlarchs>

Handbook: <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/resources/publications/grants/cps-manual-12-27-06.pdf>