

# Addressing inequity in air quality

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Air quality varies greatly within regions and cities around the world, and exposure to air pollution can have severe health impacts. In the U.S., people of color are disproportionately exposed to poor air quality. A cover story in *Chemical & Engineering News*, the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society, highlights how scientists and

community activists are using new technologies to gather data that could help address this inequity.

Despite the success of the U.S. Clean Air Act in improving ambient air quality over the past 50 years, discriminatory housing, loan and other policies—known as redlining—have limited where people of color can live. That means they are more likely to live near "pollution hot spots," such as warehouses, freeways and ports, writes Senior Correspondent Katherine Bourzac. As a result, communities of color have a higher risk of developing cardiovascular disease, asthma and other health issues. Although regulatory air monitors are being operated by federal and local agencies, they typically can't capture air-quality differences within cities.

To fill the gaps, researchers are combining air-pollution measurement technologies with land-use data, modeling studies and other data collection methods. For example, scientists studying [air quality](#) in Houston using satellites and U.S. Census Bureau data determined that majority Black, Hispanic and Latino neighborhoods had 37% higher levels of nitrogen dioxide than majority white communities. Scientists hope that higher resolution data from satellites and ground-based tools will help policymakers mitigate inequity and [adverse health effects](#) due to [air pollution](#).

**More information:** Article link: [cen.acs.org/environment/pollut ...  
-inequalities/99/i23](https://cen.acs.org/environment/pollut...-inequalities/99/i23)

Provided by American Chemical Society

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