At Community Action Works, we believe that environmental threats are big, but the power of well-organized community groups is bigger. That's why we work side by side with everyday people to confront those who are polluting and harming the health of our communities.¹

Poor indoor air quality is a common threat to our health. As people spend the majority of their time inside buildings, these buildings should be safe and healthy places to breathe. In particular, schools should be a priority because children are more susceptible to toxic exposure.²

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention state that inhaling or touching mold can cause many health effects - or none at all - as some people are more sensitive to it.³ Exposure can lead to stuffy nose, wheezing, red/itchy eyes or skin. In extreme cases, it is linked to severe respiratory problems.

Those with compromised immune systems are at even greater risk, as exposure to toxic black mold can cause lifelong effects like memory loss, insomnia, anxiety, depression, or confusion.⁴

Over ⅕ of asthma cases can be linked to mold or too much moisture in the home.⁵
The Gerena Community School in Springfield, MA was plagued with mold, leaks, and flooding for years in a tunnel that connected two beloved neighborhoods in the community. The conditions became so poor that the basement was condemned.

Soon after, the school nurse's offices were filled with students with asthma. In the heart of a majority Latinx neighborhood and the poorest district in the state, children were showing up to a mold-infested school. It was environmental injustice.

The North End Coalition, a group of concerned parents and community leaders, formed to fight against this injustice. Yet, city and state officials failed to take action to protect these students.

In 2016, North End activists came together with Community Action Works to strategize a plan to win. They brought together city and state officials in public hearings to pressure them to take action.

Finally, years after their hard work began, they won! The state and the city came to an agreement to dedicate millions of dollars to fix the leaking roof and the sloping tunnels, and halt the water leaking into the school once and for all.

At least 45 million buildings in the U.S. have unhealthy levels of mold, including in schools, which put students at risk for asthma + other respiratory diseases.  

6
Mold in your home, school or workplace can be dangerous, but you can easily detect mold and remove it.

There are many types of mold, and none of them can grow without moisture.¹⁷

You can easily detect mold in your home, as it can usually be seen or smelled.

Steps for removing mold depend on the severity of the problem. If the mold area is less than 10 square feet and you are interested in removing it yourself, follow the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control for removal.

Otherwise, it is best to call a professional for help in removing mold.

When calling a professional service, be sure to ask about their experience to ensure that they can properly tackle the problem, and ask for references to check their accountability.

Always take precautions to limit your exposure to the mold as much as possible. This includes wearing an N-95 mask, gloves, goggles, and maintaining thorough ventilation when exposing yourself to the mold area.
Controlling moisture is the key to preventing mold growth.  

If water leaks into your home, act quickly to clean up the spill and dry completely.

If you see condensation in your home (often found around windows, walls or pipes) dry the area and quickly fix the problem.

Keep indoor humidity low by using air conditioners or dehumidifiers.

Maintain thorough ventilation + air movement in your home.

Always prevent future problems to protect your health.

You have the power to protect yourself, and your community, from mold by using preventative measures.

At Community Action Works, we believe that when you and your neighbors know how to make change, you can build the power to transform our world.
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Every person deserves to breathe safe and clear air - whether that be in your home, schools, offices, etc.

This right is protected by federal law. Legally, homes must be weather-tight and water-tight.

Bathrooms must be ventilated by window, air shaft, or ventilation fan that vents to the outside of the building. This allows for proper air flow to minimize mold growth throughout your home or building.

ACT TO PROTECT THEM

If you are a tenant and find mold in your building, you should report it immediately to your landlord/building owner.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR LANDLORD OR BUILDING OWNER DOESN'T HELP

Call your town health inspector. Pull together a community group to confront those who are harming your health. Useful materials can be found on the next page!

If there is still no response, call legal aid.
Use the sample petition and fact sheet provided as a model to help organize your community and form your mission around the mold issue.

Visit communityactionworks.org for more resources.

### Sample Petition

**Dump the Coal Ash Dump**

Dear Freetown Board of Health:

We, the undersigned, support Concerned Citizens of Freetown in opposition to the continued dumping of toxic coal ash on Copicut Road in Freetown. Coal ash is very toxic and hazardous to our health, especially our children. The dumping is taking place above an aquifer and near a residential neighborhood. Please stop this dangerous activity and vote to end the dumping of toxic coal ash on Copicut Road.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (Print)</th>
<th>Address, City, Zip</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Email Address</th>
<th>Will you volunteer?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Draft Fact Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slogan</th>
<th>Graphic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Problem Statement**

**Points to support the problem.**

**Solution Statement**

**Points to Support the solution.**

**Action**

*For more information:*


8. Ibid.


10. See note 1 above.