

Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes

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Administering agency: HUD's Office of
Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes
(OLHCHH)

Year program started: Lead Hazard Control,
1992; Healthy Homes Initiative, 1999

Population targeted: Low income and very low
income families who reside in worst-quality
private housing where children under six years
of age reside or are likely to reside.

FY16 funding: \$110 Million

Children spend as much as 90% of their
time indoors, and toxic substances can
reach more concentrated levels indoors
than they do outside. Older, dilapidated housing
with lead-based paint, and the settled interior dust
and exterior bare soil it generates, are the biggest
sources of lead exposure for children. Often these
units have a combination of health dangers that
include dust mites, molds, and pests that can
trigger asthma; carcinogens, such as asbestos,
radon, and pesticides; and other deadly toxins such
as carbon monoxide.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS:

1. HUD published an important revision to its
Lead Safe Housing rule on January 13, 2017
that conforms its definition of elevated blood
lead level to that of the Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention. It also establishes
more comprehensive testing and evaluation
procedures for the assisted housing where
such children reside and certain reporting
requirements. See: [https://portal.hud.gov/
hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/healthy_
homes/enforcement/lshr](https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/healthy_homes/enforcement/lshr)
2. The National Safe and Healthy Housing
Coalition has launched a "Find It Fund It Fix It"
campaign regarding lead poisoning prevention.
See: www.nchh.org and: [http://www.nchh.org/
Portals/0/Contents/FFF-Action-Drive-Transition-
Document_Admin-Version_2016-12-04.pdf](http://www.nchh.org/Portals/0/Contents/FFF-Action-Drive-Transition-Document_Admin-Version_2016-12-04.pdf)

HISTORY AND PURPOSE

Lead Hazard Control. The Residential Lead-
Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act, or Title X
of the Housing and Community Development
Act of 1992, was enacted to focus the nation on
making housing safe for children by preventing
exposure to lead-based paint hazards (the statute
defines this as deteriorated lead-based paint,
lead contaminated settled house dust and lead
contaminated bare soil). The law authorized
the Lead Hazard Control Grants Program to
provide grants to local jurisdictions to identify
and control lead-based paint hazards in privately
owned, low income, owner-occupied and rental
housing. In 2003, Congress created Lead Hazard
Reduction Demonstration Grants to target
additional lead hazard control grants to the
nation's highest-risk cities. Both programs and
enforcement of related regulations are housed in
HUD's OLHCHH.

Healthy Homes Initiative. The Healthy Homes
Initiative was established by Congress in 1999 to
protect children and their families from residential
health and safety hazards. The goal of this program
is a comprehensive, integrated approach to housing
hazards through grants that create and demonstrate
effective, low-cost methods of addressing mold,
lead, allergens, asthma, carbon monoxide, home
safety, pesticides, radon and other housing-related
health and safety hazards. These grant programs are
housed in HUD's OLHCHH.

The beneficiaries of both the lead and healthy
homes programs are low income households and
the broader public through education campaigns.
Assisted rental units served must be affirmatively
marketed for at least three years for families
with children under age six. Ninety percent of
owner-occupied units served must house or be
regularly visited by a child under age six. Because
the funds do not cover all housing eligible under
federal policy, each grantee develops its local plan
and is permitted to target investment of grant
funds based on factors such as the presence of a
lead-poisoned child and location in a high-risk
neighborhood. The programs' funds are awarded
via competitive Notices of Fund Availability.

ISSUE SUMMARY

Recent research confirms that housing policy has a profound impact on public health, and for any public health agenda to be effective, it must include a housing component. The statistics and key findings regarding the long-term effects of housing-related health hazards are alarming. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's most recent estimate is that about 535,000 children aged 1-5 in the U.S. have elevated blood lead levels. Childhood exposure to lead can have lifelong consequences including decreased cognitive function, developmental delays, behavior problems, and, at very high levels, can cause seizures, coma, and even death. Asthma is one of the most common chronic conditions among children in the U.S.; 26 million people in the U.S. have asthma, including 9.5% of children under 18. In 2007-2008, the economic costs to society of lead poisoning and asthma were estimated at \$50 billion and \$56 billion, respectively.

The burden of housing-related health hazards falls disproportionately on the most vulnerable children and communities, contributing greatly to U.S. health disparities. African-American children are twice as likely to have asthma and are six times more likely to die from it than white children. Households with annual incomes less than \$30,000 are twice as likely as others to have lead hazards in their homes. Children of low income families are eight times more likely to be lead-poisoned than those of higher income families, and African-American children are five times more likely than whites to be lead-poisoned. Children poisoned by lead are seven times more likely to drop out of school, and six times more likely to end up in the juvenile justice system.

Those numbers begin to add up to even bigger consequences when dealing with the cumulative effects of multiple hazards. Inadequate ventilation increases the concentration of lethal indoor air pollutants such as radon and carbon monoxide, and exacerbates moisture and humidity problems. Moisture causes paint deterioration, which puts children at risk of exposure to leaded dust and paint chips. Moisture also encourages growth of mold, mildew, dust mites, and microbes, which contribute to asthma and other respiratory diseases. Asthma is exacerbated by allergic reaction to certain triggers such as dust, mold, pests (such as

cockroaches, rats, and mice), cold air, and dry heat. Use of common pesticides to control infestations can contaminate homes. Thus, a 'whole-house' approach is critical—including thorough visual assessments, air tests, and remediation activities.

Additionally, solutions and opportunities may arise through existing weatherization, rehabilitation, maintenance and home repair work. Because improperly disturbing lead-based paint may cause lead poisoning, it is necessary to use lead-safe work practices and comply with EPA's renovation, repair and painting rule (and for federally assisted housing, HUD's Lead Safe Housing rule, which was updated in Jan 2017). Many weatherization treatments have healthy homes benefits. For example, window replacement can help with lead poisoning prevention, and roof repair and insulation may help reduce moisture intrusion and prevent mold. Improving ventilation to ameliorate the ill effects of tightening a building can help ensure no harm from energy-efficiency measures.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Programs based at HUD include:

Healthy Homes Initiative. The Healthy Homes Demonstration Grant Program develops, demonstrates and promotes cost-effective, preventive measures for identifying and correcting residential health and safety hazards. HUD awards Healthy Homes Demonstration grants to not-for-profits, for-profit firms located in the U.S., state and local governments, federally recognized Indian Tribes, and colleges and universities.

The Healthy Homes Technical Studies grant program develops and improves cost-effective methods for evaluating and controlling residential health and safety hazards through a separate competition open to academic and nonprofit institutions, state and local governments, tribes, and for-profit organizations.

Lead Hazard Control Grants. The typical award of \$3 million addresses hazards in several hundred homes and provides needed outreach and capacity-building services. Grants are awarded to states, counties, and cities for lead hazard control in privately owned low-income housing. At least 65% of the grant must be used for direct activities such as abatement, interim control, clearance, and risk assessment (and to a limited extent other healthy

housing issues). Grantees are required to partner with community groups, typically by awarding sub-grants, and to provide a match of 10%-25% from local or Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. More than \$1 billion has been awarded since the program started in 1993.

Lead Hazard Reduction Demonstration Grants.

This program targets funds for lead hazard control to the nation's 100 highest-risk cities as defined by the prevalence of lead poisoning and the number of pre-1940 rental housing units. Grants may be as high as \$4 million, but 80% of the funds must be spent on direct activities, and HUD requires a 25% local match from local or CDBG funds. High-risk cities can receive demonstration grants in addition to basic lead hazard control grants.

Lead Technical Studies Program. This program funds academic institutions, nonprofit and for-profit organizations, states, Native American tribes, and local governments to conduct research to gain knowledge on improving the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of methods for evaluation and control of residential lead-based paint hazards.

OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention and Asthma Control Programs, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provide complementary programs to HUD's OLHCHH. The EPA identifies housing hazards and their impacts and provides training; CDC-funded programs provide surveillance data, education and outreach on resulting diseases and injuries; and HUD-funded programs remediate homes to remove the health hazards.

CDC Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. Until 2012, CDC's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program provided funding to state and local health departments to determine the extent of childhood lead poisoning by: screening children for elevated blood lead levels; helping to ensure that lead-poisoned infants and children receive medical and environmental follow-up; and, developing neighborhood-based efforts to prevent childhood lead poisoning. This program's funding was reduced from \$29 million in FY11 to \$2 million for a small federal effort in FY12 and FY13. Congress partially restored the lead poisoning prevention program to \$15 million in FY15 and then to \$17 million in FY16.

FUNDING

HUD FY16 funding included \$110 million for the Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes, including \$90 million for Lead Hazard Control and Demonstration Programs as well as Lead Technical Studies, and \$20 million for Healthy Homes Demonstration and Production Programs. President Obama's FY17 budget request retained level funding for these programs.

Mr. Obama's FY17 budget request maintained level funding for the CDC's Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention and Asthma Control Programs, at \$17 and \$29.5 million respectively.

FORECAST FOR 2017

A forecast is difficult at this time. Please see this link for policy and funding recommendations that have been sent to both Congress and the new transition team. http://www.nchh.org/Portals/0/Contents/FFF-Action-Drive-Transition-Document_Admin-Version_2016-12-04.pdf

TIPS FOR LOCAL SUCCESS

Many communities have improved the quality of their housing stock through development of better codes, such as the National Healthy Housing Standard. For example, sanitary codes prohibit peeling paint, standing water, chronic moisture, roof and plumbing leaks, and pest infestation. The International Residential Code requires carbon monoxide detectors in new homes with fuel-burning appliances or attached garages. Efforts are underway to: require carbon monoxide detectors in existing housing; add a requirement for radon-resistant new construction; and, prohibit lead hazards and excessive moisture that leads to mold. Increasing public awareness and concern about other housing-related hazards is fueling new attention to state and local regulation of healthy homes issues. Many communities have also urged strong collaboration between departments of housing and health; effective utilization of CDC surveillance data to guide HUD programs to families and areas of greatest need; and state Medicaid reimbursement for environmental health services in the homes of lead-exposed children and people with asthma. For example, the State of Michigan recently succeeded in obtaining a Medicaid waiver to conduct lead paint and lead drinking water pipe mitigation totaling \$160 million.

WHAT TO SAY TO LEGISLATORS

Advocates should contact their Members of Congress, ask to speak to the person who deals with housing policy, and deliver the message that funding is needed to correct health and safety hazards and lead hazards in homes. For every \$1 spent on reducing lead hazards, there is a benefit of \$17 - \$220, and for asthma control an estimated \$5.30 - \$14; healthy homes interventions prevent injury, neurological and respiratory diseases, and cancer and even death from toxins such as carbon monoxide and radon. Advocates should inform legislators of the following ways they can support reducing housing-related health problems:

- Fully fund HUD's Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes Program through which communities can fix homes with health hazards—including lead-based paint problems.
- Restore the full level of funding for CDC's Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program so that all states can provide surveillance of children's blood lead levels, promote prevention, and respond to lead-poisoned children.
- Pass and Implement the Title X Amendments Act.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

National Center for Healthy Housing, 410-992-0712, www.nchh.org

National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition, <http://bit.ly/1dvzV04>

HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes, <http://1.usa.gov/liOKkas>

CDC's Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/>