

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Lead Exposure Reduction Program

Request for Information (RFI)



Date: 10/31/19

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PART 1. General Information

1.1 Purpose of this Request for Information

The Office of the Governor, in collaboration with the Departments of Human Services, Health, Environmental Protection, Education, Labor and Industry, and Community and Economic Development, and the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, issues this Request for Information (“RFI”) to gather input and information to assist in the development of a program to reduce lead exposures in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (“Commonwealth”) by expanding efforts to have children tested for lead exposure and helping communities expand their lead exposure prevention and elimination strategies.

Through this RFI, the Commonwealth seeks to learn about the needs of communities throughout the Commonwealth to address lead hazards, the capacity to address those needs, and where gaps exist to further address lead hazards and exposure. As part of the Commonwealth’s efforts to reduce the number of properties in the Commonwealth with lead hazards, this RFI seeks the knowledge and experience of communities working to remove lead hazards from their child care centers, schools, homes, playgrounds, and other places where children live, learn, and play. Finally, agencies or businesses interested in working to remove lead hazards within their community or across the Commonwealth are also encouraged to respond.

The Commonwealth encourages all interested parties to provide feedback in response to this RFI or any part of it. A respondent may respond to all or any of the specific questions or topics included in this RFI.

1.2 Request for Information Timeline

Event	Date
Release RFI	10/31/2019
RFI Responses Due	30 days from issuance

The Commonwealth is requesting that all responses to this RFI be submitted by 12:00 p.m. on the due date. Responses must be submitted electronically to the following email account with “Lead Exposure Reduction Program RFI” in the email subject line: RA-PWRFICOMMENTS@PA.GOV.

While the Commonwealth does not intend to respond to questions or clarifications during the RFI response period, respondents may submit questions related to this RFI electronically to RA-PWRFICOMMENTS@PA.GOV using “Lead Exposure Reduction RFI question” in the email subject line. The Commonwealth may or may not respond based on the nature of the question. The Commonwealth will post all answers provided online at <http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us>.

1.3 Disclaimers

The Commonwealth is not liable for any costs or expenses incurred by respondents in the preparation of responses related to this RFI.

This RFI is issued for information and planning purposes only and does not constitute a solicitation for future business, an offer for procurement, or any other type of current or future procurement action, and is only intended to gather information and input. The Commonwealth will not award an agreement on the basis of this RFI or otherwise pay for any of the information received.

The Commonwealth may use the information gathered through this process in the development of future procurement documents; however, the Commonwealth does not guarantee that this will occur. The Commonwealth will not return responses to this RFI. Respondents will not be notified of the result of the review, nor will they be provided copies of the review. If the Commonwealth issues a procurement document, no offeror will be selected, pre-qualified, or exempted based on its participation in this RFI process.

Respondents should be aware that the responses to this RFI will be public information and that no claims of confidentiality will be honored. All responses are subject to a request for public records made under the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know-Law, 65 P.S. § 67.101, et seq., and may be subject to disclosure. The Commonwealth is not requesting, and does not require, confidential, proprietary information, or other competitively sensitive information to be included as part of the RFI submission. Ownership of all data, material and documentation originated, prepared, and provided to the Commonwealth during this RFI process will belong exclusively to the Commonwealth.

PART 2. Background

2.1 Background Information

According to the 2017 American Community Survey estimate, Pennsylvania ranks fifth in the nation for the percentage of housing units identified as having been built before 1950, when lead was most prevalent.¹ Lead exposure often does not manifest in immediate physical symptoms, but may result in long-term neurological damage, especially if the exposure occurs during the critical stages of brain development in early childhood. The dangers of lead are widely known: lead poisoning in childhood is a cause of learning and behavior problems that

¹ U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, *Am. Cmty. Survey 5-Year Estimates: 2013- 2017* at Table B25034: Year Structure Built.

persist for a lifetime. Even small amounts of lead may harm the brain and other parts of the nervous system. Lead in a child's body can²:

- slow growth and development;
- damage the brain and nervous system;
- cause hearing and speech problems; and
- cause learning and behavior problems.

The continuing seriousness of childhood lead exposure and toxicity in Pennsylvania was highlighted with the release of the 2017 Childhood Lead Surveillance Annual Report. In that year, 1,082 children in Pennsylvania were identified as having blood lead levels above 10 micrograms per deciliter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$), and another 7,575 children were identified as having blood lead levels between 5 and 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$.³ The CDC uses a blood lead reference value of 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ to identify children with blood lead levels that are much higher than most children's levels, and a reference value of 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ to identify children with lead exposure and are in need of case management.⁴

Although some communities in the Commonwealth have expanded their lead exposure prevention strategies, many properties with lead hazards remain, which contribute to high rates of lead exposure. Not all communities across Pennsylvania have the independent resources to help all children with elevated blood lead levels by addressing the source of the exposure or preventing continued exposure. In 2016, for example, Philadelphia's Lead and Healthy Homes Program had 395 new cases (*i.e.*, children with blood lead levels above 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$); however, due to limited funding, remediation was completed in only 125 homes. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the key to preventing lead toxicity in children is identification and elimination of the major sources of lead exposure. The primary prevention approach is now widely recognized as the optimal strategy because of the irreversible effects of low-level lead toxicity, and because it prioritizes prevention strategies that limit exposure to lead.⁵

² CTRS. FOR DISEASE CONTROL & PREVENTION, CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING PREVENTION: DATA & STATISTICS, *available at*: <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/data/index.htm>.

³ PA. DEP'T OF HEALTH, *2017 Childhood Lead Surveillance Annual Report: Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program* (December 2018), *available at*: <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Documents/Environmental%20Health/2017%20Childhood%20Lead%20Surveillance%20Annual%20Report.pdf>.

⁴ CTRS. FOR DISEASE CONTROL & PREVENTION, CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING PREVENTION: BLOOD LEAD LEVELS IN CHILDREN, *available at*: <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/blood-lead-levels.htm>

⁵ COUNCIL ON ENVTL. HEALTH, *Prevention of Childhood Lead Toxicity*, 138 PEDIATRICS (ISSUE 1) (2016), *available at*: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/1/e20161493>.

On August 28, 2019, Governor Wolf unveiled his initiative to create a lead-free Pennsylvania. Part of Governor Wolf's strategy is to increase the capacity of communities across the Commonwealth to reduce lead exposures. Other strategies for creating a lead-free Pennsylvania include increasing the number of children screened for elevated blood lead levels ("EBLLs"), coordinating local response teams to care for children with EBLLs, developing programs to certify more individuals in communities that may not have enough certified lead abatement specialists to perform the work necessary, and updating the available resources to aid families in accessing information on lead testing, lead poisoning, and lead exposure reduction.

Through responses to this RFI, the Commonwealth seeks to gain information from communities and other stakeholders about what programs they already have in place to reduce lead exposures, what services they wish they could provide but cannot because of limited resources, and what should be included in a lead exposure reduction program. Additionally, the Commonwealth is requesting information on the capacity of lead abatement providers within communities. The Commonwealth intends to use the information gathered to develop a program that would support existing lead exposure reduction strategies while also providing support for new programs in communities affected by lead hazards.

2.2 Guidance Principles / Vision Statement

The Commonwealth seeks to utilize information and knowledge received through this RFI to establish a statewide lead exposure reduction plan that develops and leverages partnerships with local governments, service providers, health care providers, child care providers, schools, and businesses.

PART 3. Request for Information Submission Format

Through this RFI, the Commonwealth is soliciting information and comments regarding the purpose described in Part 1.1. All interested respondents are asked to respond in writing to this RFI, per the items outlined below.

3.1 Response Submission

Please prepare responses simply, providing straightforward and concise language and descriptions. All responses should be produced in 12 point font. Please limit your response to no more than 20 pages, not including the cover letter and attachments. Please refrain from sending marketing materials to the Commonwealth.

3.2 Cover Letter (optional)

Please include a cover letter with the following information:

1. An introduction to the respondent's organization, background, and interest in preventing and eliminating exposure to lead hazards.
2. General information about the respondent and respondent's organization, including an address and a point of contact along with a telephone number and an e-mail address.

3.3 Conceptual Solutions and Strategies Response

The following provides a suggested structure for a response to this RFI. This structure is intended to minimize the effort required to develop and analyze submitted responses. Please address the following:

3.3.1 Local Programs

- a) Has your community identified a need for lead exposure reduction?
- b) What lead exposure reduction programs exist or existed in your community? Please identify whether programs no longer exist due to no identified need or due to other barriers, and what those barriers may be.
- c) If your community does not have a lead exposure reduction program, why does one not exist? Please identify whether it is due to no identified need or due to other barriers and what those barriers may be.
- d) Are you a current grantee of the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD") Lead Hazard Control Grant?
 - i. If so, what are some challenges and opportunities in completing this work? What components of this grant are "working" for your community?
 - ii. If not, have you applied either previously or for the current grant cycle?
 - iii. If you are not a current grantee or a previous or current applicant, have you considered applying?
 - iv. If you have not applied, what are some of the reasons you did not apply for the HUD Lead Hazard Control Grant?
- e) What are the sources of funding for your existing lead exposure reduction programs?

3.3.2 Eligibility – If your community has any type of lead exposure reduction program, please answer the questions below:

- a) How are families or residences identified for eligibility to receive funding for lead exposure reduction?
- b) What income levels do you use for eligibility for your lead exposure reduction programs?
- c) Is there a waiting list for the lead exposure reduction services?

- d) Are renters permitted to apply? If so, what do they need to secure from the landlord or homeowner to receive funding?
- e) Are landlords permitted to apply?
 - i. If so, are they required to provide a percentage of the total cost of the lead exposure reduction work?
 - ii. If so, what requirements, if any, exist for landlords or homeowners to receive funding?

3.3.3 Data Collection

- a) What data does your community collect regarding lead exposure in children younger than six years (including but not limited to: lead hazards in homes, schools, and child care centers; the number of Environmental Lead Investigations completed; referrals made to Early Intervention; referrals made to abatement service providers)?

3.3.4 Community Collaboration

- a) What community outreach or media campaigns occur in your community to educate parents, guardians, child care providers, landlords, and others about lead hazards?
- b) What stakeholders do you need to be at the table when discussing how to address lead exposures in your community? Examples include: school districts, housing authorities, redevelopment authorities, county human services offices, hospitals, pediatricians and other medical providers, early intervention providers, drinking water suppliers, parents of children, and chambers of commerce.
- c) Does your community have a coalition focused on lead?
- d) If a child is identified as having been exposed to lead, what supports do you use to help the family? Does your program have the capacity to do “case management” for follow through and coordination of home testing, child testing, lead abatement of the home, and provision of medical services to the child?
- e) Has there been a program in your community that works for addressing lead exposure, either through exposure reduction efforts, increased resource collaboration, or increased education for providers and families?

3.3.5 Community Needs

- a) Do you have child care centers operating in your community that have identified a need for lead exposure reduction due to either paint or water sources?
- b) Do you have child care centers where more than 30% of the families served are low-income families or families that receive a child care subsidy?

- c) Do you maintain a registry of homes that have had lead abatement services done or of homes found to need lead abatement?
- d) Does your local community housing agency or lead abatement program currently have (or had in the past) a certified project designer or any other state-certified lead workers on their payrolls who help plan projects and decide whether lead abatement or Renovation, Repair and Paint (“RRP”) is best for the project?
- e) What local ordinances are in place in your community regarding lead?
 - i. Are there ordinances that offer protection for renters from negative consequences (for example, raised rent or eviction) if a rental property has a lead abatement completed?
 - ii. Are there ordinances requiring landlords to verify that their rental properties are lead safe? If so, do these ordinances only apply to specific types of housing (for example, where a child under 6 lives) or do they apply to all rental properties?