

Inform and Engage All Residents

LOCAL ACTION CHALLENGE FOR LEAD SAFE AND HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS

Empower and engage stakeholders on housing quality issues

A robust public awareness campaign on healthy housing informs residents and stakeholders about available resources and interventions, as well as aids in preventing lead poisoning and other environmental hazards in residential housing. When a municipality makes healthy housing a priority, residents, landlords, health care providers, social workers and nonprofit partners can work collectively to prevent and address home health hazards. A key step for municipal leadership is sharing information about indoor health risks.

What does this look like in action?

Because there is no cure for lead poisoning, the primary and most cost-effective strategy to protect residents' (and especially children's) health is preventing initial or continued exposure. As with lead, a prevention strategy that limits exposure to mold, smoke, dust mites and other allergens found in housing can reduce the incidence of potentially fatal asthma attacks and avoid triggering other related respiratory illnesses. Using municipal communications channels to share information with the public and key stakeholders on how to identify indoor hazards and their health impacts is the first step in a public awareness campaign. Beyond promoting access to resources and awareness of potential exposure, mayors and municipal leaders can also facilitate [community conversations](#) and leverage health fairs to highlight the importance of getting screened if hazards are identified at home, in the workplace or at school.

Action Steps

- 1 Create an awareness campaign around indoor environmental hazards, identifying the signs or risks and directing residents to resources and treatments.
- 2 Access all communication channels available to your municipality to promote messages regarding housing hazards, including the use of Public Service Announcements and the distribution of materials in public spaces such as city hall and libraries.
- 3 Create and promote a tip line for residents and advocates to report potential hazards or housing code violations.
- 4 Explore available data sources and use that information to ensure that your awareness campaign reaches and targets high-need neighborhoods, including those with older housing stock.
- 5 Align municipally led efforts to create awareness around health threats caused by housing hazards with the efforts of advocates, landlords and nonprofits leaders.
- 6 Focus multi-lingual marketing on populations at higher risk of exposure, such as households with young children, pregnant women, workers in certain industries and immigrant populations.
- 7 Host a town hall or community conversation on the topic of housing and health.

For more information and resources

- [Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention-At-Risk Population; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [29 Indoor Environmental Health Hazards; US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes](#)
- [All American Conversation Toolkit; National Civic League](#)
- [Lead Service Line Replacement; Lead Service Line Replacement Collaborative](#)

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IDEAS

- National League of Cities: [Civic Engagement](#)
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes: [Healthy Homes & Outreach Materials](#)

Action Challenges

- 1 INFORM AND ENGAGE ALL RESIDENTS**
Empower residents to tackle housing quality issues. Launch a public awareness campaign on healthy housing and/or host a town hall to learn about residents' priorities, and serve as a convener for landlords, tenants, health care providers, social workers and teachers to support community organizing around health hazards.
- 2 TAKE STOCK OF HOUSING**
Review housing codes and enforcement policies. Produce an internal policy document on housing code enforcement policies, noting areas that can better support healthy and equitable housing policies. Catalogue and explore potential funding sources.
- 3 COME TOGETHER ON HOUSING HAZARDS**
Convene stakeholders to create a housing hazards task force. Engage city departments and external partners, with an emphasis on data-driven decision making, to identify and address lead and asthma challenges in housing for all population groups.
- 4 STRENGTHEN HEALTHY HOMES POLICIES AND PRACTICES**
Create resources and build commitment across stakeholders. Establish a registration system and database of rentals and associated violations that is available to tenants and use these tools to promote property standards and improve enforcement.

For More Information

Please visit
nlc.org/healthy-housing-mayors-challenge

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