

## Lead Questions for FY25 NJ Agency Budget Hearing

### **DCA**

*Background: NJDCA manages lead paint assistance programs for income-eligible renters and property owners and was appropriated \$180 million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) which must be spent by the end of 2026 or it goes away. After 2026, we must ensure that lead paint assistance continues to be funded to meet the significant need of New Jerseyians living in old housing stock potentially contaminated with lead paint with ongoing investments in the state funds that remediate lead paint these homes. In Trenton alone, the largest municipality in NJ with the highest percentage of children with elevated blood lead levels in state fiscal year 2021, 71.88% of housing was built before 1978, the year that lead paint was banned, according to NJ Potential Lead Exposure Mapping Tool.*

*In 2021, the Legislature took an important step in addressing lead poisoning by passing a bill that was signed by the Governor (P.L. 2021, c. 182) requiring the period of inspection of lead-based paint hazards in certain rental single-family, two-family, and multiple dwelling units. The first inspection must take place no later than July 22, 2024. Now, it is critical to ensure the funding is there to remediate lead hazards in our homes.*

- Why is the Single Family Home Lead Hazard Remediation Fund grant program cut by \$1 million in the proposed state Fiscal Year 25 Budget?
- How will lead assistance programs in NJ be funded when ARPA allocated funds expire?
- How much remaining ARPA funds are appropriated for lead paint?
- How will the remaining ARPA funds appropriated for lead paint assistance programs be spent by the end of 2026?
- Can ARPA funds be used to translate the lead assistance program application to languages other than English and provide lead assistance agencies with language interpretation?
- Can ARPA funds be used to support the Department of Health childhood lead case management?
- Can ARPA funds be used to support municipalities with the implementation of the lead-safe certificate law?
  - Will the [Lead Grant Assistance Program \(LGAP\)](#), to assist New Jersey municipalities with costs associated with compliance under P.L. 2021, c. 182., be reissued for 2024 and beyond?
    - How will DCA ensure that funds are distributed to municipalities with the highest need?
- Can ARPA funds be used to support the creation of a digital case management and database system to support data reporting for the lead assistance program and the lead-safe certificate law?
- Can ARPA funds be used to help municipalities pay for software to track their 1 & 2-family rentals?
- Why is the Lead Hazard Control Fund a nonrevolving fund?

### **DEP**

*Background: There is a need for additional funding for lead service lines (LSL) replacement, with priority for low-income communities with a large number of LSLs. When combined with the \$379 million that NJ is projected to receive from the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, there would be nearly \$1.2 billion in funding that would only cover half of the estimated total \$2.1 billion cost of LSL replacement.*

- How will underserved communities be prioritized for lead service line replacement?

- Are there plans to increase New Jersey's Technical Assistance Program (NJ-TAP) for lead service line replacement in overburdened communities?
- How will the potential \$2.1 billion cost to replace lead service lines in NJ be met when federal funds do not cover even half of this cost?
- When can we expect the updated NJ Lead and Copper Rule?

## **DOH**

*According to the New Jersey Health Department (NJDOH), between July 2020 to June 2021, the five largest municipalities with the highest percent of children under 6 years of age with an elevated blood lead level at or above 5 micrograms of lead per deciliter were Trenton (6.4%), East Orange (5.3%), Irvington (5.2%), Plainfield (4%) and Paterson (3.6%) and this number is still expected to rise. Currently, New Jersey requires public health intervention for all children with an EBLL at or above 5 µg/dL, but soon, New Jersey will require intervention at 3.5 µg/dL to align with CDC guidance. It is anticipated this action will nearly double the number of children entitled to health department intervention.*

- How will local health departments receive support and funding to address the estimated doubling in the number of children with elevated blood lead levels (EBLL) who will require public health intervention due to a change in Blood Lead Reference Value?
- At what level will environmental assessments be required under new rules?
- Are there any plans for cross-departmental collaboration between the DOH childhood lead poisoning prevention program and the DCA lead assistance program and lead-safe certificate law?

## **DCF**

*Background: In February 2023 the Department of Children and Families entered into an agreement with the Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development, to provide funding to the New Jersey Department of Health to conduct copper testing in the water samples retrieved for lead testing as well as provide training for childcare facilities*

- What is the status of the testing and training program? When is the program expected to be completed and will there be continued funding?

## **DOE**

*Background: The Department of Education (DOE) oversees the \$100 million in state bonds authorized for water infrastructure improvements in NJ schools through the Securing Our Children's Future program. The school buildings in many of NJ's urban school districts are very old, with Newark's averaging 90 years, and they often contain extensive lead plumbing. These districts typically have severe budget constraints and are likely to rely principally, if not completely, on the state to adequately fund the work required to address lead in drinking water.*

- What grants have been issued for the [\\$100 million earmarked for Water Infrastructure Grants](#) to address issues of lead in school drinking water from the [\\$500 million 2018 Securing Our Children's Future Bond Act](#)?
- Are there any plans to incorporate school lead in drinking water testing data into a centralized public database?

*These questions were developed by committees of Lead-Free NJ, a statewide collaborative whose members work to ensure that New Jersey's children are free from lead poisoning and that our environment is lead-safe by advocating for changes to state and local policy. Learn more at [www.LeadFreeNJ.org](http://www.LeadFreeNJ.org) & contact [cbolinger@njfuture.org](mailto:cbolinger@njfuture.org) with questions.*