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Lead-Free NJ Encourages NJDCA to Apply for US HUD Lead Hazard Reduction Grant Program as Part of Long-Term Lead Paint Funding Strategy

Dear Commissioner Suárez,

The Lead-Free NJ Housing Committee is reaching out to encourage the NJ Department of Community Affairs to apply for the Department of Housing and Urban Development Lead Hazard Reduction Grant Program. The application is due August 14: <https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/359873>

NJ DCA should apply for this grant to secure additional lead hazard abatement funding in advance of December 2026, when the \$180 million in American Rescue Plan Act Funds that currently support the state Lead Paint Remediation and Abatement Program (LRAP) expires.

We commend NJ DCA for overseeing the completion of lead safe work for approximately 1,500 units in NJ thus far, and for developing an impressive program infrastructure comprised of over 50 local agencies throughout the state to implement the program. In addition to protecting people from lead exposure, this work generates significant economic activity. Assuming two staff per agency, this program has created over 100 jobs, and supports the work of qualified local contractors, including 81 contractors certified to conduct lead paint abatement¹ and nearly 400 contractors certified to perform lead paint remediation². If new funding sources are not pursued, the continuation of this work past 2026 is in jeopardy. LFNJ will continue advocacy efforts to secure state funding through the legislature. To complement this advocacy, we encourage NJ DCA to pursue the HUD LHR grant opportunity as a critical source of funds.

The HUD grant is a four-year grant; the current grant permits recipients to elect to begin receiving funds in 2026, which would align with the expiration of current LRAP funding. Furthermore, depending on the outcome of the current federal budgeting process, it is possible that HUD may not offer the LHR grant next year. It's prudent to take advantage of this funding opportunity while it is available, as the federal budget proposed by the President reduces US HUD Lead Hazard funding in future fiscal years.

NJDCA is in an excellent position to apply for this funding as the state agency responsible for administering NJ's Lead Paint Remediation and Abatement Program and NJ's law requiring periodic lead paint inspections of certain rental housing.

¹ https://nj.gov/dca/codes/publications/pdf_lead/ld_abat_c.pdf

² <https://cdxapps.epa.gov/ocspp-oppt-lead/firm-location-search/distance>



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Although the current funding source for LRAP will expire in only 17 months, the need for lead paint remediation in New Jersey will not expire, as nearly 3,000 children are still poisoned every year in New Jersey³. NJDCA should pursue all available funding sources to help maintain lead hazard control program operations, including the current HUD Lead Hazard Reduction Grant Program opportunity.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue, and we appreciate our partnership.

Sincerely,

Rashan Prailow, Founder, THINK Group,
Lead-Free NJ Steering Committee Co-Chair

Bert Cooper, Vice President for State and Local Strategic Services, Green and Healthy Homes Initiative
Lead-Free NJ Housing Committee Co-Chair

Alix Fellman, Director of Community Development, Trenton Health Team
Lead-Free NJ Housing Committee Co-Chair

³ <https://www.nj.gov/health/childhood-lead/documents/childhood-lead-2022-annual-report.pdf>