



# LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

## A Community Guide for Immediate Action

Exposure to lead can have devastating health consequences. Lead in drinking water poses a significant, complicated public health concern for people today. The safest solution—removal of lead pipes, fixtures and solder—requires extensive planning, capital investment, staff capacity and time. That daunting list can discourage action. Yet, [lead must be addressed](#). There are many immediate actions a community can take, even as it begins planning for a more systemic, long-term solution. Whether or not your community has lead service lines, all municipal leaders can take action today to ensure the safety of residents.

### TAKE ACTION TODAY

*The following actions are designed to assist community leaders and staff in protecting citizens and building public trust on lead issues and actions.*



#### Communicate with your community

Begin a transparent dialog that is open, consistent, accessible and ongoing with residents and businesses about lead in drinking water. Host public meetings and send factual and useful information out to all residents on what they can do to protect themselves, including what is entailed in replacing a lead service line.



#### Distribute water filters + post clear signage

Provide or subsidize the cost of water filters that assist with lead-removal. And inform the public whether or not a public drinking water facility (such a water fountain) has been tested, and what the results were.



#### Provide free lead testing program

Ensure that water testing is easy, dependable and equitably promoted within your municipality to all residents. Publicly report these results on a regular basis—this includes water quality results as well as performance of the testing program itself—both help build transparency and trust. Consider sharing the cost of such a program with neighboring communities.



#### Determine where lead service lines are

Complete a lead service line inventory and digitally map within your community. Based off these findings, identify critical areas of focus e.g., lower income-households living in older homes and buildings.

*More actions on the next page!*



## Develop cross-agency partnerships

Partner with community health and social service organizations, educational institutions and housing providers to help identify priority areas with highest risk of exposure, and work with these partners to educate residents on lead issues.



## Require lead service line disclosures

Similar to lead paint disclosures, require disclosure of lead service lines in property sales and rental property agreements. Ensure property owners and renters are provided the information they need to help keep themselves safe.



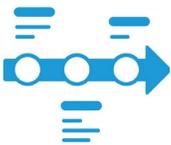
## Develop financing tools

Investigate a cost share program, rebates, tax relief or other means of supporting private property owners to replace lead service lines and fixtures. Consider developing a financing program where the utility pays the upfront costs to replace a lead service line, and the replacement cost is added to the property's utility bill over a multi-year period.



## Leverage existing funding + plans

Utilize existing funding assistance such as the State Revolving Fund and Community Development Block Grants to help finance, and even cost-share on the replacement of lead service lines. Likewise, leverage existing capital plans for water main repairs with the removal of lead service lines.



## Address permitting timelines and costs

Ensure permit costs and timelines, as well as other administrative requirements directly related to lead service line replacement work are not barriers to property owners replacing their lead service lines.



## Set a goal and get started on a comprehensive removal plan

Get started on a lead service line replacement plan for your community, and make sure financing is a part of it. Use the Lead Service Line Replacement Collaborative's roadmap ([www.lslr-collaborative.org](http://www.lslr-collaborative.org)) for help in developing and implementing lead service line removal programs. Make proactive and sustained community engagement a core element of your planning process.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Lead service line replacement is a daunting task, however, there are a number of actions every community can take today that will increase safety, build public trust and set your community on a path toward a comprehensive lead removal plan.

For more information, contact Danielle Gallet at the Metropolitan Planning Council at [dgallet@metroplanning.org](mailto:dgallet@metroplanning.org).

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